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FITZ OF FITZ-FORD;

A LEGEND OF DEVON.

BY MRS. BRAY,

AUTHOR OF

‘DE FOIX,’ ‘THE WHITE HOODS,’ ‘THE PROTESTANT,’
&c. &c. &c.

Is the tale true?

Aye marry, ’tis a tale
Of old tradition, full of wonderment
And such sweet sorrows, as make crystal beads
Hang from young maidens’ eyelids, whilst the aged
Shake their gray locks, and, deeply sighing, tell us
Such is the world!

MANUSCRIPT PLAY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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FITZ OF FITZ-FORD.

CHAPTER I.

Reason, my son,
Should choose himself a wife ; but as good reason,
The father (all whose joy is nothing else
But fair posterity), should hold some counsel
In such a business.

SHAKSPEARE.

JUDGE GLANVILLE, the proprietor of Kilworthy, to whom we must shortly introduce the reader, was, at the date of our narrative, nearly sixty years old. In his person he was large and corpulent, and there was in his countenance that expression of frankness and intelligence which distinguishes an honest and intellectual character. It was to Kilworthy that, on the very day after John Fitz had confessed his love for Margaret to his father, old Sir Hugh bent his steps in order to seek an interview with Glanville, the subject of which our story demands should here be made known to the reader. " You are welcome, Sir Hugh," said Glanville

to his neighbour, as he entered the apartment ;
“ it is long since we met : yet, though I am a man who lives, as it were, out of the world, still, believe me, I do not bury with myself the recollection of my friends, and am, at all times, rejoiced to see them, or to do them a service. How fares the lady and mistress of Fitz-ford ? ”

“ Dame Fitz is well, I thank you, neighbour Glanville,” replied Sir Hugh, “ and bid me bear her challenge to you for not honouring our poor house at the May-day games. We had an interlude and some merry sports, that gave much contentment to our guests.”

“ I thank Dame Fitz,” said Glanville ; “ but all sports are past with me for ever, and I begin, too, to feel the effects of time ; but I am glad to see you, Sir Hugh, retain your health and vigour as well as you did twenty years ago.”

“ Why yes, master Glanville,” replied the old knight, “ I thank God, I can still stir me about without feeling much the worse for it, except when I encounter your hill here. Kilworthy is almost as bad to surmount as one of the Dartmoor tors ; but still I can manage it. And as for my mind, I believe my faculties are quite unimpaired, and that I know just as much about the science of astrology now, as I

did when I first took it up nearly thirty years ago. I believe I am quite as capable of putting up a scheme to pleasure my friends, and shall be happy to do any thing to oblige you, neighbour, in that way, if you wish to take a peep into futurity. I have already, to oblige two or three of my particular friends, pointed out to them the hour of their deaths with tolerable certainty."

Glanville smiled at this friendly offer of the whimsical old knight, and said, "Thank you, Sir Hugh; but I feel no great desire to put your skill to the test of naming the time of my death; though God knoweth I am not overburthened with the love of life; but I doubt not He who gave me being, will judge fitly as to the best time and manner in which he may please to resume it; I trust my life, therefore, with God, and am neither presumptuously secure as to its duration, nor too fearful as to its conclusion, knowing my bountiful Creator careth for every work of his hand. And it seems to me, Sir Hugh, that in your traffic with the stars, you something encroach upon the province of the bench, since I know not there can be any lawful authority for a human being to pass sentence of death upon another, unless

he be a judge or a physician. There is, however, another point of your learning and skill that I would fain make free to tax, in behalf of Archdeacon Summaster, who is at the old jars again about tythe wood, and I, knowing that you are a man more skilled in the law of *sylva cædua* than myself, would now refer to you."

"Aye, aye," cried Sir Hugh, who, in the midst of all his astrology, retained a love of his old profession, and had no dislike to see his opinion referred to as a matter of authority by a judge himself; "my learning and skill, such as they are, shall be at your service. In my work of *Fitz his Reports*, you will see a very notable settlement of such a question. I know something also of the case of master Summaster, inasmuch as a kinsman of my own is client therein. I hold that the woods in dispute are not tythable; for look you, neighbour Glanville, what says the statute 45th of Edward III. chapter 3, where the preamble goes expressly to lay a prohibition for wood twenty years old and upwards?"

"And do the woods in question come under that clause, think you?" said Glanville.

"Come under that clause, neighbour!" cried Sir Hugh; "aye, as fitly do they as my head

comes under my cap, being covered and protected by the same. For look you," continued the astrological lawyer, "these woods cannot possibly be considered under the clause of *cædua sylva*, or a *cadendo*, which is to fell, cut down, or cut up, *quasi dicas*, fellable wood, or wood fellable, since it was adjudged, in the 11th of Henry VI., that no wood should be felled under the clause *cædua sylva*, if it be past the growth of twelve years, for firebotes or otherwise, since it then becomes *grossæ arbores*, not *cædua sylva*. Very well; what then becomes of the paltry shift set up by the Archdeacon under the common law, (will that avail, think you?) wherein he pretends to have a right to cut young sprigs out of old stocks?"

"You think, then, the claim cannot hold good?" said Glanville.

"Hold good!" exclaimed Sir Hugh, "never, whilst the statute recited exists; never, whilst there is one gown at the bar left to explain it. Such is my opinion, and such shall I leave it in writing, for the benefit not only of master Summaster, but of all posterity; moreover, adding something by way of *post scriptum*, respecting those important points of dotterels and dormers,

and how far they differ from housebote and plowbote.”

In the more important studies that engrossed the mind of Sir Hugh, he seldom found occasion to give his friends, whether legal or otherwise, a taste of his old vocation ; but when he did so, he generally gave them such a fire as made them not at all desirous often to encounter the attack ; and nothing could stop him till the last shot was spent. On these occasions, perhaps, he might with more propriety be compared to the wheel of a jack, which stands immoveable if you let it alone ; but once put the spring in action, and on it goes with the utmost velocity, till it has run down the full length of the chain, and is finally stopt by its own exhaustion.

“ And now, neighbour Glanville,” continued Fitz, “ though my kinsman would heartily wish to settle things in an amicable way with the Archdeacon, for it is his maxim, as well as mine, that *pax semper preferenda est bello*, yet, if he will go on to extremities, he must go on, and we must of necessity shoot at a prohibition ; and——”

“ Perhaps,” said Glanville, interrupting him, and who probably dreaded the penalty of hearing any more opinions from his friend, “ perhaps

you would let me know the business that has procured me the pleasure of seeing my old friend Sir Hugh Fitz thus early in the morning ?”

“Why yes,” cried Sir Hugh ; “ though I fear it will be but a foolish business after all ; but I am a father, and, as such, have a father’s feelings for the sins, and faults, and follies of a child, let them be what they will. Upon my life, I believe I should love John Fitz, though he were to be hanged by the sentence of the law.”

Glanville looked much pained. This random shaft of the chattering Sir Hugh had struck him in a tender point ; it had touched a wound ever green, and, though Sir Hugh meant nothing by it, yet it was his misfortune, as it is that of great talkers in general, to follow at random the train of his own ideas, without reflecting on what may be the consequence of his idle expressions to another.

“ I know what are the feelings of a father,” replied Glanville, “ and deeply, foully as a child may offend against the laws of God and man, yet nature will be heard ; her voice, like that of conscience, cannot be stifled ; and vainly do we try to steel the breast against either.”

He spoke this in a tone of deep feeling, and

with a vehemence of manner, that recalled the self-engaged attention of Sir Hugh to turn his thoughts a moment upon his friend. Sir Hugh was a thoughtless and a vain man ; but not one of an unkind heart. He saw instantly that, to a mind acutely alive upon a subject so extremely painful, a single word acts like a spark upon a train of gunpowder, and in a moment spreads an alarm truly fearful, though from so small a cause. A prudent man, had he consulted the most delicate means of conciliating the feelings of Glanville, and of affording him time to recover himself from the shock, would have remained silent, or have given another turn to the discourse ; but Sir Hugh was as unlucky in his theme of consolation, as he had been heedless in giving occasion to render any consolation necessary ; and being also led away by certain reminiscences connected with his favourite studies, he now said, “ My worthy friend, I am sorry to see that a few words, dropped carelessly by me, when speaking of my own feelings as a father for the follies of my son, should have called up any painful recollections. But alas ! what can we say ? what is fated, is fated. The stars never tell a lie ; and how can we contradict them, do

what we will?—and you may remember I foretold something of those unpleasant circumstances concerning your poor daughter.”

Judge Glanville started up, and with a look in which the agony of his own feelings was strongly depicted, as well as resentment at this abrupt and plain allusion to his daughter's fate, he said, “Forbear, Sir Hugh, forbear, I beseech you. You are the only man, calling yourself my friend, who has named her to me for nearly eighteen years. You are the only man who would dare to do it with impunity.”

Sir Hugh was a little confounded, and attempted to offer an apology; but it was lost, for the wretched man who stood before him seemed at the moment to be absorbed in his own thoughts and feelings. His eye was fixed upon the ground, his hands were pressed together upon his forehead, and not a word escaped his lips: he looked the image of sorrow and of shame. In a few minutes, however, he seemed to recollect himself, wiped away from his eyes a tear or two that had started unbidden, and, though with a quivering lip, entreated Sir Hugh to go on with the affair upon which he came. “I will,” said Sir Hugh, “I will. You know that unlucky prediction

uninformed ; as she did not seem to know positively her own birth-day, though I offered, the very first time I saw her, to give her an insight into all the miseries and calamities of her future life, if she would but let me know the day and the hour she was born. But some women are strangely blinded to their own comforts and advantages, and are not always so correct as they should be, in remembering the hour, day of the month, and the year in which they were born ; though, I must say it, Mistress Margaret is the first young woman I have met with who is thus oblivious on the subject, having generally found a failure of memory in these particulars amongst ladies somewhat advanced in life, and especially when they retain, like our blessed sovereign, the honours of virginity."

Glanville spoke as soon as Sir Hugh made the least pause to let him slip in a few words. " Mistress Margaret," he said, " is, in all things, worthy the affection of an honourable man. If virtue, beauty, and gentleness of spirit, be merits in woman, I never yet saw one who was her equal. Her fortune is but very small ; and, indeed, to be plain with you, it would not be sufficient to maintain her. But she deserves a friend ; and she has one, I hope,

in myself, who would never let her want protection and a home. Your son, perhaps, is aware of this circumstance of fortune."

"Oh, yes," cried Sir Hugh; "and though most fathers are apt to think a good dower no bad accompaniment to a wife for a son, yet, to speak the truth, neighbour Glanville, I am not the father who would put his child's happiness into one scale, and make it kick the beam by throwing a money-bag into the other. And, in my opinion, a worthy-hearted maid, with some sense, and a good temper, is fortune enough in herself for any man, unless he be a Jew or a courtier. My son shall be happy, if I can make him so; and as for money, why I have plenty of it for us both—so let that go."

"Sir Hugh," replied Glanville, "I honour the disinterestedness and generous character of your mind; and I am glad to see that in this age, when fathers look to find for their sons fortunes such as are said to be obtained from the New World, that we have one man wise enough to prefer merit to interest—to consider wisdom better than gold—virtue purer than fine gold. Indeed, in most circumstances of life, it is, I believe, far better to leave our children, when of proper age, to make their own

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election ; since the happiness or misery of the married state chiefly concerns those who are bound to each other by the contract. Yet, alas ! we are not always wise enough to remember this till too late." Glanville sighed deeply, and once more resumed an air of attention.

Fitz continued :—" Yet there is one point on which I wish to be satisfied before I give my final consent to this business, and that point refers to the respectability of your ward's connexions. Who is she—and of what family ? The question is abrupt, but of import ; since, though I care not about increasing the riches of my house, yet I must not tarnish nor diminish its honour."

" My own honour is concerned in answering you plainly, and to the best of my information," said Glanville. " The truth is, I know little more about Mistress Margaret, than so far as her own personal merit is concerned ; and for that I can avouch freely."

" Yet you are her guardian," said Sir Hugh ; " and, as I am given to understand, almost her only friend."

" You shall hear," replied Glanville. " The late Sir Frederick Champernoun, who re-

ceived knighthood from the hand of Queen Mary, was, in early life, the companion of my studies at Oxford. We were sincere friends. In our riper years, difference of opinion, both religious and politic, separated us ; and, as I have since learnt, on the accession of Elizabeth, Sir Frederick fled this country. I heard of him no more, till, during his last illness in France, he addressed to me a pathetic appeal to receive his only child under my roof ; since, from the disturbed state of France, he could not die in peace, and leave her there exposed to so much danger. In addition to which, the small wreck of his fortune was in England, and still encumbered with the unsettled claims of law. I received this appeal of the dying father in behalf of his child, and at first consented to receive her as a temporary charge ; but her own merit soon rendered her dear to me. She has been three years beneath my roof ; and I feel for her that regard to which my heart had so long been a stranger ; a regard that may be termed almost parental.”

“ And is this all you know about the damsel’s family and parents ? ” said Sir Hugh.

“ Who was Sir Frederick Champernoun ? ”

“ Of a good family, I believe,” replied

Glanville, “from the North of England; but not connected with the Champernouns of Devon. One thing I ought to tell you (though I have never named it to Margaret, lest I should wound her feelings, since I am assured she is herself ignorant of it), that Sir Frederick acknowledged his daughter was illegitimate; and that there were circumstances peculiarly painful connected with her birth, that might be made known to me hereafter; though he did not point out by what means I was to attain such knowledge.”

Sir Hugh looked much discomposed. “I am sorry to hear this,” he said; “and am still more sorry to think that my son should have placed his affections so unwisely. Illegitimate!—painful circumstances connected with her birth—may be known hereafter;—doubt, secrecy, mystery!—Dame Fitz will never consent to such a marriage. Why, neighbour Glanville, I verily believe that my wife would rather see her family extinguished at once, than behold a bar of bastardy quartered sinister in the family arms.—Illegitimate! it will never do, never.”

“I have dealt plainly with you, Sir Hugh,” said Glanville. “I have told you all I know; but surely these things cannot affect the honour

of your family, since a wife receives honour from her husband, as far as rank is concerned, but gives none. Yet she does honour him, and that in the dearest point, when she confers a lustre on his name, by nobly bearing it. You have passed over fortune, pass over this objection also, and make your son happy; and I will venture to predict that no star that ever yet shone can promise half so much good fortune to your house as you will find by gaining such a wife for John Fitz, and such a daughter to yourself. Dame Fitz will have reason to rejoice. Go home—talk to her yourself; you have the authority of a husband, and must be the ruler of your own house.”

“ Pray, neighbour Glanville,” said Sir Hugh, “ are you the ruler of yours?—and do you really find wives so very tractable as you think mine will be?”

This question was a home thrust, since the world whispered that the present Dame Glanville, the second wife of the Judge, carried matters with a high hand, both within and without the walls of Kilworthy. Glanville only answered that he, as Sir Hugh Fitz well knew, had, for some years past, given up almost all his affairs within his own family, to the ma-

nagement of his wife, seldom mingling with the world, and spending his days in retirement and privacy.

Sir Hugh fidgetted about the room, started a thousand objections, then spoke of his son's happiness in the tenderest manner; declared he thought very well of Mistress Margaret; cursed the bar of bastardy with all his heart, and wished all the heralds and genealogists, together with the pride of families and of wives, at the devil; and, unable to fix upon any resolution in this uneasy state of feeling, had recourse to that shift of all weak and irresolute minds, namely, to take time about the affair, and let it settle itself if it could; never considering that, in the interval, he should leave his son's mind a prey to anxiety, suspense, and still exposed to the danger of allowing an affection, already deeply rooted, to twine itself still closer round his heart; since difficulty, suspense, and delay, invariably enhance the value of the object of his affections in the eyes of a lover, and fan the fire of his passion, instead of extinguishing his hopes.

CHAPTER II.



Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinal to me. I am sick in displeasure to him; and whatsoever comes athwart his affection, ranges evenly with mine.

SHAKSPEARE.

WE may often observe in human life, a chain of small circumstances that lead to great and powerful ends, yet so trifling in themselves, and so silent in their course, that it would be difficult to trace them in detail. Such may be compared to a variety of little springs or rivulets, that steal, scarcely noticed, meandering along, till, by their junction at one point, they form a stream, broad, rapid, and irresistible.

Even in like manner had the trifling, but constant intercourse, the little acts of kindness and attention that had passed between John Fitz and Margaret, led to that mutual attachment, which now seemed to involve the happiness of either, and to which the conduct of Sir Hugh not a little contributed, by the vacillating course he pursued. He had not the

courage to communicate the affair to his wife nor had he the heart to forbid all intercourse between the parties ; nor yet could he make up his mind to give his consent ; but contented himself with admonishing his son, saying it would be better did he think no more about the damsel, at least for the present. How far such admonitions, and such indecision, acted upon the mind of the young Fitz, may be easily guessed, since he that very day renewed, as might be expected, his visits at Kilworthy, and his attentions to the lovely ward of its master.

Glanville, when he found that want of fortune was no serious objection in the eyes of Sir Hugh, thought the other cause of disapprobation so very weak and futile, that, really wishing Margaret well, and knowing her worth, he did not doubt but that a little time would remove an obstacle, solely grounded in prejudice ; and which, in his own opinion, was but of little consideration, balanced as it was by the merits of the young lady. So far, therefore, from laying any restraint upon her conduct, he allowed John Fitz free access to his house, nor did he watch, like Argus, the motions of the young people, so as to deprive them of those little opportunities of endear-

ment, which love knows so well how to turn to account.

When the family were seated in the hall, John Fitz generally contrived, by the luckiest chance in the world, to be seated next to Margaret ; and often, whilst the rest were engaged in some theme of general discourse, contrived to fix her attention upon himself. If a walk in the park, or an excursion in the neighbourhood was proposed, John Fitz had always an arm at the service of Mistress Margaret ; and often was found useful in assisting her to clear the rugged path, to cross the rocky bed of a rivulet that interposed itself in their course, and in short, seized every occasion of proving his devoted preference to Margaret beyond all things else in the world.

These excursions, however they might afford opportunities for an intercourse of the utmost confidence and freedom, were not, however, absolutely solitary in their character, since Lady Eleanor Howard, the relative and guest of the Glanvilles, and Sir Nicholas Slanning, the intimate friend of John Fitz, usually joined them. And it may well be supposed that, however desirous Love might be to blind the eyes of all the world, so that none but the parties under

his rule should perceive his presence, yet people were not quite so blind as he would make them; so that the affection subsisting between the heir of Fitz-ford and the fair stranger, speedily became a theme of debate amongst the country gossips, relative to the propriety or impropriety of the match.

As, however, there were certain persons who had an interest, or a motive, for putting a stop to this delightful intercourse of hearts, some of them did not content themselves with pursuing a passive conduct like Sir Hugh; who, on all occasions of doubt, mistrust, or difficulty, consoled his mind, and contented himself with having recourse to the stars.

We have said thus much by way of introduction to a scene it now becomes necessary we should make known to the reader. And as a farther prelude, we shall only add, that on an evening (not very long after Sir Hugh's interview with Glanville), Lady Howard sallied forth alone, and bent her steps towards a place called the Pixies' Pool, lying within the extensive domain of Kilworthy.

This spot was characterized by that kind of beauty so peculiar to the vallies of Devon, whose rocky, tumultuous, and foaming rivers,

are, perhaps, unequalled in any part of England. It lay between two hills, the highest of which was crowned by trees that hung feathering down its sides. The Walla, that crystal stream, immortalized by a native bard,* flowed gently, with low murmurs, over the pebbles that formed its bed. On the green banks grew the purple harebell, the primrose, and tufted daisies, bending their heads before the light breath of spring, that seemed to dally with every leaf and bough that hung around. The birds that tenanted these wild brakes, accompanied with their evening song the music of the waters,

“Marrying their sweet notes with the silver sound.”

Thus gliding forward, the stream at length encountered a mass of rock, near which a deep black cavity, with moss-grown sides, formed a natural basin, that received the stream, and where it lay as a still and glassy mirror. A large aperture, like the lip of a cup, allowed the waters a free passage to continue their course from the basin or hollow. Thence the ground formed a gentle descent, and being

* See the beautiful episode of the Loves of the Walla and the Tavy, in Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals*.

thickly strewn with masses of rock, the Walla, after passing this basin, called the Pixies' Pool, entirely changed its character, and rushed, leaping and bounding, tumultuously forward, white with foam, and dashing over every obstacle that offered the least impediment to its course. On either side the rocky basin grew a small grove of trees, composed of beech, sycamore, and the weeping-willow, that gracefully drooped its head, and seemed to stand, like Narcissus, contemplating its own beauty in the clear mirror beneath.

The evening now drew in apace, the sun was slowly sinking below the western hills, and left, like great ones of the earth at their departure, the fading traces of a lingering glory. The distant heights of Dartmoor, with their mighty tors, already wore the black and mourning mantle of night; while, from the deep vallies, and their many rivers, a thick and dusky vapour slowly arose, and extended itself, like a vast curtain, over every surrounding object. The cattle lowed in the distance. The birds ceased their clamour, and winged their flight to seek shelter in their nests; each sound of the day gradually sunk to rest, and "silence girt the woods."

At this spot, and at such an hour, there stood, resting upon a portion of rock that formed a seat near the Pixies' Pool, the woman who, on the morning of May-day, had borne the token and the letter from George Standwich to Margaret. Her name carried with it an idea of something fearful, a sound fitted for nurses to fright children — Betsy Grimbal; a name to this day remembered in Devon, with no pleasing associations. She was famed, even in her own time, for the bold, cunning, and ferocious cast of her character; whilst many of her adventures, during her connexion with the outlawed miners, form now a tale of legendary lore, to wile away the evening round a winter's hearth, and many a listener turns pale, and in his way home shuns to approach the spot said to have been the scene of this woman's death.*

Betsy Grimbal was low in stature, but strongly limbed. Her arms, red, mottled, and muscular, looked as if she could wield a sword with as much ease as she did the hammer with which she was accustomed to break the masses of ore found by her confederates in the mines.

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* Under a gateway of the abbey of Tavistock, at present inclosed within the gardens of the vicarage.

Her countenance was harsh rather than vulgar : for this woman, though now sunk and degraded, in early life had known gentle nurture, and had received a degree of education far beyond that possessed by most of her compeers. She had a hard, sun-burnt, and bold brow ; a pair of small bright eyes, like those of a ferret, and a glance, so sly and cautious, that cunning was the decided character of her countenance ; to which a pair of thick, black, bushy eyebrows, and a quantity of hair of the same colour, that grew like mustachios upon the upper lip, added so unfeminine an expression, that had a stranger met her on the waste of Dartmoor, as Banquo did the weird sisters on the blasted heath, he might have said to her :

—— You should be woman,
And yet your beard forbids me to interpret
That you are so.

It was Lady Howard who approached the spot, and eagerly exclaimed, as she drew near her, in a tone that evinced some trepidation :
“ Are we alone ? Does any living soul linger near ? Did you meet aught bearing a human shape in your way hither ? ”

“ No,” replied Betsy Grimbal ; “ we are alone, and safe from every human ear ; this

spot is a proper one for our encounter, since neither churl nor gentle would venture near the Pixies' Pool after sun-set for the world's worth. The fools would hear a voice in every breath that stirs the leaves, and fancy a sigh of some unearthly spirit, that would shake his own with terror; whilst every distant object, the bald front of an old tree, or of a tall rock, would seem as a dead carcase, sheeted, and risen from the grave. You may speak fearlessly and frankly."

"I will do both," replied Lady Howard. "The family are this evening absent from Kilworthy; I excused myself from bearing them company, else I had not ventured, at such an hour, to meet you in this place. I felt I must see you, were it only to tell you that your plans have failed, and that my hopes are ruined."

"How!" said Betsy, "has the love-powder failed?"

"Talk not to me of love-powder, and such follies," exclaimed Lady Howard with impatience; "I tell you that John Fitz loves Margaret; and not all the love-powder on earth, unless it were that which carries fire and lead with it, could move his heart, or deaden the

feelings he entertains for her. He loves her, and I—I am passed over, hated, despised!—Death!—it is madness to think upon it. I am made but as an instrument between them, or rather as a prop, when they want a *third* person to lean upon, to give some support to their meetings. Lady Howard must be the companion of their walks! Lady Howard must share their converse!—And how? Why even as a picture shares one's company. It looks flesh and blood, but neither hears, sees, thinks, nor claims any other notice or observance but that of a senseless gaze, or of a passing remark from the living being who stands before it. And must I be made such a thing as this?—But let it be. It is well, very well. What care I for John Fitz? or for the woman he chooses to think fairer and better than myself? Let him go;—I have pride, if I have nothing else to console me for the loss of a boy.” Thus, in a flow of violent expressions, having vehemently unburthened the rage occasioned by envy, jealousy, and disappointment (those sisters as fatal to human life as the three who hold the thread and shears to help it to a close), Lady Howard threw herself upon a portion of the rock, with her back towards Betsy Grim-

bal, crossed her arms, and raised her head with an air of pride and resolution that seemed to shew she was in earnest in the latter part of her speech. Though the dusk of evening was fast gathering around, yet it was not so dark but a deep flushed cheek, and a few sparkling drops, that fell like dew upon a heated soil, might have been seen if Betsy could have looked Lady Howard in the face. However, she stole nearer to her, and offered to lay her hand gently upon the shoulder of the enraged fair one; but she shook her off, exclaiming indignantly, "Let me alone—I want none of your counsel—none of your help. You have brought me to this pass, and I care neither for you, nor it."

"But you do care for it," said Betsy Grimbald, in as softened a tone of voice as she could affect; "and if you would but hear me, all things might yet be well. Come, come, Lady Howard, learn to know your best friend. Nay, never start at the word—I can forgive an angry one from you, as I would the pettish mood of a child when it thinks it has lost its toy."

"You have deceived me," cried Lady Howard. "You first cajoled me with your tricks till you got possession of my secret—of my

folly, let me say ; and since you have turned both to your own account."

" It is not so," replied Betsy. " Did I not read your destiny by the power of my art ? —Did I not foretell"—

" You filled my mind with a dream," said Lady Howard. " You raised before my eyes a vision of happiness that has ever since haunted my imagination ; and now all ends in disappointment ; and the thoughts of what is lost, rise like spectres to my view, that bring to mortals tidings of the house of death. They are fearful and unnatural. You know not the spirit you have called up in my breast."

" Nay, talk not thus wildly," said Betsy Grimbal ; " but tell me, in plain terms, what has befallen ?"

" Nothing less than this," replied Lady Howard ; " that old Sir Hugh Fitz, instead of being averse to his son's pursuit of this beggarly stranger, plays the part of suitor for him, and to no less a person than her guardian, Glanville. How the affair is settled I know not ; but this I know, that John Fitz has thrown off even his attempts to disguise his ill-concealed affection, and now openly worships at the shrine of this goddess, which he has set up."

“ Is that all ?” said Betsy Grimal : “ that is nothing ; it will not hold long.”

“ Not hold long,” cried Lady Howard ; “ why every day it is more apparent. If my lady mounts her horse, who is groom to hold the stirrup ?—why the heir of Fitz. If she drops her fan, who but he is the ready lacquey to pick it up ? If she speaks, his ear is chained to her lips, whilst he devours every word, and rates every idle expression of her’s as the choice conceit of a rare and excellent wit. And then if she sings, why he will sit with folded arms, and gaze upon her face in such wrapt attention, that he has neither eye, sense, nor hearing but what is Margaret’s ; and then comes a long drawn sigh, with some softly whispered words, that seem as if the heart went with them, crying, ‘ Oh ! sweet Margaret, I could fancy heaven itself were music when I hear thee sing !’ And all this while I may sit, aye, by chance, by his very side, with no more notice than my lady’s household cat, that is suffered to occupy a place on the settle, because she is too tame to do mischief. It makes me mad to think of these things. Had he followed a noble girl, one born to honour, and to rank ; or of such high pretensions that I

could no more compare with her, than a pale and glimmering star can hope to vie with the queen of night, it would have been something less humiliating. But to be thus slighted for a low, base-born, silly girl, whose beauty is not without question, whose wit lies in cunning, and whose chief merit is pride, rank pride, trimmed up in the garb of modesty ; this is beyond my patience."

" Yet you must be patient," said Betsy Grimbal ; " pray be composed. Cease this war of words, and hear me. You love John Fitz,— nay, never deny it, never turn away, nor bite your lip after that fashion. Many a man plays the fool at one time in his life. Many a man may be won, who little thought he should be so, by the woman he afterwards calls his wife. Men are like birds, they are shy of the net that is spread for them ; but once let me teach you how to spread it, and let my game be entangled but in the slightest thread of my meshes, and I'll so clip the wings of the flutterer that there shall be no more flight, I warrant you."

" But what can you do ?" said Lady Howard, " if Sir Hugh Fitz sanctions his son's choice ? and how can I compel love from one who now, perhaps, holds me in hate ?"

“ It is no such thing,” said Betsy ; “ why should John Fitz hate you ?—Remember, there was a time when he thought Lady Howard the loveliest woman in all the county of Devon, till yonder minx bewitched him—and but for her, John Fitz had been your own ; yet now you say he hates you. You lovers see but in extremes, and therefore fancy what is not love, is hate. And as to Sir Hugh Fitz, I tell you again that he shall not consent to his son’s marriage with this woman : I can command the means to prevent that.”

“ You command the means to prevent it !” said Lady Howard in a tone of surprise ; “ you ! who I know, or, at least, suspect, to be connected with those violent men, those outlawed miners, that have become the terror of the country. Speak soberly, and I may believe you. You dare not show your head in the town for fear of the stocks or the clink ; and even those who traffic with you in your own way, do it by stealth as I have done. And do you talk of preventing the marriage of the heir of Fitz ?”

“ I do, and will prevent it,” said Betsy Grimal, “ for I possess the power to do so ;

though by what means, it nothing concerns you to know."

"You speak riddles," replied Lady Howard ;
"I am not a witch to read them."

"Tell me," continued Betsy Grimbal,
"would it pleasure you, even should your own hopes be frustrated, to destroy those of Margaret?"

"You know it would," answered Lady Howard. "Why will you force me to speak thus plainly? The slave who does his master's will, questions not his motive; yet I see not how you, who are so mean an instrument, should become one of so much power."

"The meanest agent is sometimes the most dangerous," replied Betsy Grimbal. "Hath not the viper, which crawls in the dust, a sting as deadly as a lion's grasp? Both can destroy man, though he be lord of the creation. I know a man—yet ask me not his name, nor his quality, nor wherefore it should be so; yet there is such a one, who would rather see yonder moppet hearsed at his foot, than behold her the wife of Fitz—and yet he has a dear interest in the welfare of Margaret."

"Who is this man?" said Lady Howard

eagerly ; “ and by what means,—how can he prevent this ? ”

“ He can do all ; but you must ask nothing. He is one to whom these times are dangerous, and therefore he lies close. His power is large, though it is shrouded in mystery. His course is like that of the thunder-stroke, which is never heard till it is felt. I will seek this man ; fear nothing. The marriage of John Fitz and of Margaret shall be broken, and then all I have foretold you shall come to pass.” Betsy Grimbal, as she spoke these words, fixed her eye keenly upon Lady Howard, and observed she seemed to ponder, as if she hesitated to give her assent ; however, she only said, “ How can this be ? Will Fitz, think you, ever forget the past ? ”

“ I will tell you how it can be,” said Betsy Grimbal. “ Margaret, by her artful bearing, her seeming simplicity and affection, has won the heart of Fitz. Let me find the means to separate them, and he, no longer fascinated by her presence, will awaken from his dream of folly ; the shadow on which he doated will be gone, and reason will once more master his affections. Then will we improve the occasion. His mother desires his union with you ; she

will make his father desire it also ; and as to his *love*, there are means that act on the affections, though fools call them unlawful ; yet I know how to furnish them. There are medicines, potent as the night-gathered hemlock—medicines that never fail. I have drugged many a bowl in my day that has defied leech and priest to destroy its effects.”

“ Good heavens ! what mean you, woman ? ” cried Lady Howard ; “ are you one of those who, they say, vend drugs that give death his due before the natural hour of payment ? Our queen, Elizabeth herself, has been assailed by creatures of such dire traffic. You have helped me to misery ; would you now make me the instrument of guilt ? ”

“ I make you neither,” replied Betsy Grimal. “ If you demand my aid, you must be content to take my means, or give them up. What doth it concern me with whom John Fitz should wed ? What care I if he marry this woman, who will one day cover his very name with disgrace ? Mystery already hangs about the birth of Margaret. Let the veil but be withdrawn, and shame, beggary, dishonour, will then stand naked before the view of all men. I have served you more for love than

gold. It is at your own will to employ or to discard me ; though, for your sake, I should be sorry to see one thing."

"To see what?" exclaimed Lady Howard.

"To see you made the scorn of your enemies," said Betsy Grimbald. "I can tell you what will chance. The tongues of the foolish never sleep ; and there are those who already say, that, had John Fitz preferred you to Margaret, he would not have been despised. But now they will think Margaret was fairer, or better, or of more worth ; or, it may be, she will herself pity you when she is the wife of the man who discarded you for her sake."

"She shall not," exclaimed Lady Howard ; "by all my hopes of heaven or earth, she shall not. Her pity ! the very sound is odious ; I will not live to be pitied. Pity is the miserable benison that goes to the beggar with his dish. Pity dispenses to him the paltry dole that gives him the privilege to live, to infect the wholesome air with the breath of pestilent disease. Hatred, curses, injury, they are all things that a free spirit may encounter without humiliation, since they demand courage to repel them ; but pity is contempt : it is the last insult an enemy can offer to the fallen. Let all things else

desert me, I will keep the pride of a stout heart, that can be broken but by death himself. You have my leave to act as you will in this business ; yet I am still lost in wonder to hear one so low-born talk so largely."

"Low-born!" said Betsy Grimbal; "are you sure that I am so low in birth, because I am low in fortune? Have these been times when those who sail on the broad ocean of life, could always keep the helm, and drift before the wind for fortune's harbour? How many a goodly bark in these latter times has been driven amongst rocks and breakers, till of her stately bulk nothing remains but a tempest-worn and shattered wreck! Even such a vessel am I. In youth I was housed and cared for with all tenderness; but now, nothing is left me but the sense, and that I can never lose, that I am in mind above my low estate. If I live by dealing sometimes hardly with the world, I do but pay back a debt of requital, for the world dealt hardly enough by me."

"Thus one evil follows hard upon another," said Lady Howard. "You have taught your own mind to act cruelties, and to sanctify them with the name of justice, of requital. You have instilled this doctrine into me; and by your

arguments I am infected, even as the polluted garments of the diseased are said to spread the plague. But remember, I will do nothing, nothing more than may be necessary ; I will spare even Margaret, as far as she may be spared, all unnecessary pain. She shall live."

"What ! to complete her triumph ?" cried Betsy Grimbal ; "shall she a second time supplant you ? Remember, it was by her machinations you were slighted."

"Have done," said Lady Howard ; "you croak in my ears the recollection of what I would forget. You are as baneful to me as the nurse who tells the sick man, when he demands what hour it is that chimes, that it is but the death-dial which ticks near him. "I want no provocation to do myself right, and your reward shall be large—when shall I hear from you again ?"

"When I have done that which is worth telling," said Betsy Grimbal ; "till then farewell, and learn to know me truly. Remember, a simple casket may hold the jewel of much price : even so, under my uncouth exterior, the will and the heart to serve you lay hidden. I will venture all to do it ; but time and patience must bring forth my work."

“I believe it,” replied Lady Howard, “for the crocodile must be hatched in the shell before it receives vitality to become a destroyer.—Farewell. Talk of my paying thee in gold for service, and it is just. Talk of any thing but thy love-service, for that will find no credit, even with me.”

So saying, Lady Howard put some pieces into the hand of Betsy Grimald, and hastily dismissed the woman, whom she employed and at the same time despised.

After Betsy was gone, Ellen paused, fixing her eyes on the deep black pool that lay before her view, and thus spoke as she looked upon it:—“It is so. Thus smooth and deep lie the passions of the human soul, even as the waters sleep in the basin of this rock. Let hope, like the sun, but shine upon them, and they are brilliant in light and joy. Withdraw that light, let disappointment, as the cloud, obscure their lustre, and straightway they become black as midnight—and there, see yonder how they rage, and swell, and bound over every obstacle that would impede their course: such a stormy current is human passion when the crossing tides of opposition would impede its passage. Then strength of will, then the concentrated energies

of the mind, like these several streams, which though broken, run to the same point, shall prevail and bear down those obstacles that would arrest their course. It is the weak and drooping tree that is torn asunder by the tempest; the firmly-rooted oak resists it: and even so will I meet the perils that cross my path of life."

With this resolution Lady Howard quitted the spot, a lamentable example of one of those characters who possess considerable energy both in thought and action, which, if turned to good, would render the possessor of it as a guardian and friend to the less highly endowed part of society; but, when turned to evil, makes such a character become miserable in itself, and dangerous to all who may chance to fall within the vortex of its influence or its actions.

CHAPTER III.

These are the villains
That all the travellers do fear so much.

* * * *

By the bare scalp of Robin Hood's fat friar,
This fellow were a king for our wild faction.

SHAKSPEARE.

WE shall now, like Harlequin in the pantomime, who but on waving his hand changes sea to land, or takes his ideal voyage from the torrid to the frigid zone, at once transport our reader from the upper regions of the earth to those which lie below its surface, deep imbedded within the bosom of our common mother. In plain English, we shall conduct him into a cave, that at the time of our narrative gave entrance to a mine rich with silver ore ; for in this part of Devon, as well as in the northern district, it was once found in considerable quantities.

The scene where this mine was situated was one of peculiar beauty. The Tavy flowed rapidly along, with the most picturesque reaches in its

course, between two hills, that rose so abruptly on either side, that in parts they resembled cliffs, broken and varied in form and colour. In other places, woods of oak hung luxuriantly down their sides. And where the soil was insufficient to admit the growth of trees, it was covered with purple heath ; except when cliff and rock arose, many of whose isolated portions, assuming the venerable and stately appearance of some castellated tower, gave an air of boldness and grandeur to the scene.

On that side the river where the hill was less elevated was seen a crag, from the crevices of which started the mountain ash, and, bending forward, hung above the river Tavy, which was here collected, by a ridge of massive stones, the remains of the Abbot's weir, into a broad and deep pool ; but, with a sudden descent, became lost to the eye of him who looked upon it from a distance, and again caught the view, as, some way on, it pursued its circuitous course.

A small aperture in the face of the rock, shaded by the boughs of an oak that grew from the interstices, gave entrance to a natural cavern, the interior of which, by the assistance of art, was divided into two recesses, with pillars left as supporters between them. At the

extremity of this cavern another aperture, so small that it could not be entered but by bending the body, once led the way, through a passage carefully concealed, to the mine of silver ore, then the object of illicit traffic—since, by the law of England, all of this description became the property of the crown. The mine, which we now describe, has long since fallen in, a common fate with those of ancient date: but the cavern called by the name of the Virtuous Lady, may still be viewed, and the scenery about it will well reward the artist, or the lover of the picturesque, for the trouble he takes in rambling to its vicinity.

It was on the evening when Betsy Grimald held her interview with Lady Howard, that a man of a stout and robust appearance, short in stature, but broad-set in the shoulders and chest, advanced cautiously towards the entrance of the Virtuous Lady. He was habited after a singular fashion, his dress being neither that of a landsman nor a seaman, but a mixture of both, with some affectation of finery to boot. His doublet was of blue fustian, thickly set with small silver buttons. He wore large loose slops of murray-coloured taffeta, overlaid about

the waistband with tarnished gold lace. A Cordovan boot, something the worse for wear, covered his legs ; and a hat of black velvet, with a red feather and band, stuck on one side the head, shaded a face that literally glowed with colour ; red and copper seemed to dispute which should predominate. A pair of black and curled mustachios, with a short thick beard, added, by contrast, to that force of colour we have just noticed, in the same manner as the glow of a furnace is most brilliant when opposed to darkness. His nose might have saved, had he been a stage-player who acted Bardolph, the cost of one framed of paste-board ; since it was indeed an “everlasting bonfire light,” a very flaming brand. A buff-belt sustained a pair of pistols ; and a good cutlass that hung by his side, peeped forth from under a loose watch-cloak that this goodly personage wore, as the finish of his dress, upon his shoulders.

He advanced without hesitation to the door of the cavern (for a rough door, formed of oak, secured the inmates from any sudden intrusion), and rapped loudly upon it with an oaken cudgel that he carried in his hand. The sound was answered by the deep-mouthed bark

of a dog, which seemed stationed as a guard within the cavern; and another of the canine race, placed at a greater distance, took up the alarm, just as one sentinel does that of another, when it is given from a distant post, and barked and yelped fiercely in accompaniment.

“Down there, Turk!—peace, Pero!—a curse upon your yelping throats! Down, I say, and let me hear who the devil it is that raps after this fashion at such a time!—Who’s there?” continued the same voice in a louder key; “and who are you, and whence come you, that you rap as if you would beat the door down at such an hour as this?”

“Open, I say,” cried the stranger; “open to me, a friend, Emanuel Noseworthy, captain of the Swallow, and a friend to all rovers, on sea or land.”

The door was cautiously opened; but as the person who acted as porter carried no light, the captain stumbled over the threshold as he entered. “A curse upon your caution,” he said. “Why this place is as dark as a ship’s hold. Go, bring a torch, or I shall founder against these rocks before I bring up into harbour.”

“Give me thy hand,” said the guide; “we have parted the entry from the cave since you

were here last, by some stout oaken boards ; it is but a turn, and you are safe in our hall."

" Safe as among the breakers, I trow," replied Noseworthy. " But where is your captain, or your leader, or your—what do you call him ?"

" Here," said the guide, and turning suddenly round, at the end of a narrow passage, he led the way into the inner apartment of the cavern, where George Standwich was seen seated at a table in company with two or three other persons, and Levi the Jew. An iron lamp, that hung from the roof of the cavern, afforded a red and flickering glare of light, that gleamed upon the breast-plate of Standwich, and shewed every object around in broad masses of light and shadow, the former glowing fiery-red from the colour of the flame. The effect produced by it was forcible, yet it partook at the same time of an unearthly character. It was indeed that contest of flame and darkness which would suit with the fancied regions of Pandemonium.

On one side sat Levi the Jew, peering around with " cat-like watch," at every person and every thing, and eyeing the countenance of Captain Noseworthy with cautious curiosity,

stealing a glance whenever the blood-shot eyes of that rover were elsewhere engaged. Two or three other persons of a sufficiently suspicious appearance, were also seated; and Standwich, who looked like a king in person and dignity amidst such a crew, alone seemed to bear any resemblance to a better order of men than that of the very lowest in manners and profession.

Standwich saluted the newly arrived guest, bade him be seated, and ordered refreshments for his service. "By the light of our lady's brow," said Standwich, "you are welcome man, for we have that for you to bear which must find wings over the water to let our friends know what has chanced—Where lies your vessel? Does the Swallow float in the cove, or has she dropt down the Tamar?"

"Dropt down to the devil!" said Noseworthy, "why the black hulk was so shattered and beaten about, yon night when the wind blew up a hurricane, that I have been fain to put her into Falmouth for repair. There are some honest fellows there, who will rig, stop a leak, or new bottom a vessel without being too curious about her; and care not if she hoist Dutch, English, or Spanish flag, so the ducats are but clinked down to pay for the job. But as to

going over the water with your matters at present, it will not do ; I shall not cross the herring pond till all is right and tight, lest we swamp and become ourselves but a cargo of stinking fish ; and so, whilst my Swallow is being new feathered at Falmouth, I came here, do ye see, to look after my old companions.”

“ This is unfortunate,” said Standwich ; “ we have news that should reach the ears of Don John, and that immediately.”

“ Aye,” said Levi, “ and we have for him a goodly lading of that precious ore which he has had from us before, by your means, at a rate lower than that of any market of Europe. The gold and silver from the new world was never so cheaply gotten. It is pure as the metals of Ophir, albeit, they were of gold ; but these are of silver, and I have assayed them myself in the furnace seven times heated.”

“ And kept the best part back, and threw copper filings into the melting pot to make up the weight, I will warrant me,” said Noseworthy. “ I know a Jew all the world over—why in Spain he clips you a doubloon till it falls within the compass of a pistole. In the Low Countries, your Jew sells the mouldy hair of rotten goats for English sheep’s wool. In

Germany lead and pewter are passed by your Jew for Cornish tin. Dispute the point with him, and he shews you it has been coined,* and swears that the face of her virgin Majesty of England never told a lie, and never was impressed but upon metals of virgin ore as pure as herself. And in France, my Jew will eat you bacon under old Catherine's nose to prove he is no heretic—I know all your tribe, and all your tricks into the bargain. But come, Captain Standwich, it is long since you and I have met, and a pull at a hooped pot will be no bad thing to float us into good fellowship. And as for the Jew here, give him the sops of the posset, to shew that we would be liberal, and do nothing in wrath.”

“ I know thee, Captain Noseworthy,” said Levi, “ thou wast ever as Nabal, given to wine ; and of thee may it be said, that thy name, like his, expresseth thy nature, for thou hast a nose worthy of thy name, and of the pottle-pot which has helped to make it. But I will not bandy words with thee, knowing thou art the son of the perverse and rebellious woman.”

* When the tin is stamped, or as it is called, *coined*, it is considered good ; as in former times, the coining was nothing more than striking off a piece from the coin or corner as the due of the king.

“Rebellious!” exclaimed the Captain, “who dares call me rebellious?—Say such a word again, and my weapon shall try conclusions with thy skull. Rebellious! Grant I do trip my brig across the water to touch upon the Spanish coast, why, is she not the Swallow? and doth not swallows migrate, and leave this cursed drenching, weather-cock coast of yours, that blows all points of the compass at once, for better and for warmer climates? and if I do traffic with Don John, or other personages, it is but in the way of trade, and we must all live—no offence to the Queen.”

“Captain Noseworthy,” said Standwich, “there is no need to vapour here about your loyalty to Queen Elizabeth; my good friend Levi is no more disposed to swear allegiance to her, or to betray our concerns, than he would be to give up his own interests to certain ruin. He has already suffered enough in the service of this heretical woman to make him an enemy both to her and to her rule.”

“I have suffered in good sooth,” said Levi, “even as did David when he faithfully served Saul, and was requited by that ruler with manifold injuries. Like him, I have fled from service, and have taken up my dwelling with these

people, even as did David when he fled to the cave of Adullam."

"Where all the rogues, thieves, and people of Gath, who lived in fear of a catchpole, joined him," said Captain Noseworthy. "Is that the comparison with which you would compliment us, you Jew dog? Are we not gentlemen—gentlemen who live freely, and take our own pleasure, and make our own laws, without troubling the parliamentary statutes?—Come, my lads," he continued, seizing upon the stoop of liquor that stood near, "here's success to all moonlight voyages by sea and land, a health to Henry Percy of Northumberland, and to the royal bird in the cage."

"That is to Mary, Queen of Scots," said Standwich; "I join the pledge with all my heart; and may the plans of her friends succeed to free her; and may she fill the throne of England, though, to do so, every step that leads her to it should be placed upon the carcase of an enemy."

Every one present answered the pledge except Levi, who replied to it with a groan.

"Why, how now, man?" said Noseworthy; "art not thou a friend to the wished-for rule of right, to the holy cross of Rome? I thought

thou wast half converted, and only wanted the blessing of absolution, which, let a man be as black as the devil with sin, will give him a white-wash on the first confession :—that's a religion for us of the seafaring line. We have hard lives, take and give hard blows, win dearly, and spend lightly, and think not always of the ten commandments when we put into port. But what of that ? Flesh and blood is flesh and blood ; and, as my grandam used to say, religion is a comfortable thing, and so, I say, is the Pope's religion ; it's like an easy chair to a tired man, he may look to rest upon it after travelling the devil's own road. And as to penances, show me a greater than that of a tempest or a shipwreck, where all goes by the board, when a man has no chance left for safety, but such as he finds in the cock-boat that floats like a cork, till, if he chance to bang against a rock, it's all over ; and so the penance and the man die together, and he takes the Pope's compliments to St. Peter, to gain admission into heaven. That's my religion, and the saints bless the makers of it, say I."

Captain Noseworthy, during this and much similar rhodomontade discourse, paid his respects so repeatedly to the flasks and flagons of good

liquor, which had been produced chiefly for his entertainment, that, strong as he was in meeting such encounters, his brain became somewhat heated, and, in proportion as the fumes of strong drink ascended, so did his harangues grow more lengthy and vociferous, his discourse being seasoned with a shower of oaths and other expressions, which we omit in courtesy to the reader. Noseworthy was, in fact, one of those piratical, well-paid, and busy seafaring, land-meddling personages, so many of whom were countenanced by the powers of Rome and Spain, and who, in the days of Elizabeth, so frequently ended their career by decorating the gibbets of Tyburn, Wapping, and other parts of England.

Indeed, as it is well known to every student of the times of good Queen Bess, the attempts made by these people were so repeated, and the number of assassins and disaffected persons continually sent into this kingdom on the most desperate adventures, so great, that it could have been only by the especial interference of Providence that the queen was preserved from all their machinations. The historians of the day have recorded that some of these persons were men of desperate fortunes, and that they

associated themselves, and intrigued even with people of the very lowest order of society, as well as acting the part of messengers, or go-betweens, with those who were rebels or disaffected in the higher classes. Cornwall and Devon, though less disturbed, perhaps, than other counties by such agents, nevertheless were not altogether free from these desperate emissaries; and how they employed themselves, we shall hereafter have occasion to notice in our pages, since the acts of at least one of these characters will be found closely connected with the story we have undertaken to make known to the reader. To return from this digression.

Whilst Noseworthy was amusing himself with the wine flagon, and his companions by recounting the desperate adventures of his lawless life, Standwich finished the business he was transacting with the Jew, carrying on the conversation in a low voice; though, from the boisterous vociferation of the pirate, and the attention of his auditors, there was no fear of interruption from their remarks, as no one listened to the affairs of their leader with the Jew.

“ You have dealt hard with me, George Standwich,” said Levi; “ my share of these

gains ought to have been greater than the monies you have consigned to me in this leathern bag. I will tell them over again 'ere I pray to the God of Israel this night—but not here; for these fellows will grudge the Jew his honest guerdon. They have talons like the hawk to fasten upon coined silver and gold. And furthermore," continued Levi, "there ought to be an allowance made me in consideration of the loss I have sustained on the coins taken by me as a part of the last payment; for, look you, there was amongst them not less than thirty testons of Edward the Sixth, stamped with the portcullis, that have been cried down in value, by proclamation, from twelve-pence to sixpence, and now again from that to fourpence. Calculating the loss on the same from the original values, at which I took them, it maketh—first, deducting the sixpence, and then farthermore the two-pence—in the whole sum, a loss of twenty shillings and eight-pence sterling monies, which—"

Here a loud knocking at the door again disturbed the inmates of the cave. The man who acted as porter of these hidden regions, again went to answer the summons, and the clamour of the dogs was again renewed.

The person who now entered the cave formed a strong contrast to the first comer, Captain Noseworthy. He was tall, and somewhat meagre, and wore, beneath a riding cloak, a shabby suit of black, composed of plush and taffeta. His countenance possessed marks of intelligence, though every feature was as pinched and as sharp as that of a sick man just coming out of a wasting fever. He had a restless grey eye, full of animation, the pupil of which appeared to dilate and flash with brilliancy as the speaker became warm and interested in the theme of his discourse. The moment this person stood within what may be termed the hall of the cavern, he rushed towards the table, and hastily exclaimed: "I bring news, great news! I have this day ridden many a long mile, and have spared neither spur nor breath to find you, Captain Standwich, to warn you. But," he added, as if recollecting himself, and looking round the cave, "are we all here friends?"

"All," said Standwich; "all here stand in the same peril, since all have, in some shape or other, transgressed the laws. You may speak without fear. That gentleman with the red feather in his cap, who holds the flagon in his hand, is Captain Noseworthy, of the Swallow.

This, my honest friend Levi, a Jew by birth, but who has as little a mind to grace the gibbet as any Christian. Captain Noseworthy, this gentleman, who has ridden so hard to bear us intelligence, is Master Cuthbert Mayne, already tolerably well known in Launceston and elsewhere, and whose deeds have formed a theme for ballad-mongers and poets."

"You need not tell me who he is," cried Noseworthy, "I know him well enough;—why he was barber-surgeon at Launceston, and quack-salver to boot, till he took up the trade of serving the Pope and the devil—and here's a health to them both, as worthy friends to sea-rovers;" and the Captain again paid his respects to the flagon, which had already made such inroads in his wits.

"And what is thy news," said Standwich to Cuthbert. "Thou seemest to lack breath to tell it. Set thee down—take time—wipe thy brows, for they drop tears with thy haste.—Drink this cup, to wash the dust from thy throat; and then for thy tidings." So saying, Standwich handed a cup of wine to Cuthbert, who swallowed its contents at one draught.

As he returned the empty cup to the board, he exclaimed in a hasty voice: "We are un-

done—our friends in London have failed. Edmund Champion the Jesuit, Ralph Sherwin, Lucas, Orton, Bosgrave, with all those noble spirits who at the court of Rome vowed to set foot once more in their native land of England, and never to quit it till they had accomplished Elizabeth's death, and freed the captive Mary ; these men have been all taken, accused of high treason, and put to a shameful death, with all the horrid penalties of the law. Such has been the reward of men who looked to overturn an empire."

Standwich was for a moment struck dumb by this intelligence. He pressed his hand against his forehead, and seemed to be lost in his own reflections. Levi continued his occupation, that of being engaged with his tablets ; the rest listened in silence ; but Captain Noseworthy gave a long whistle, as he would were he invoking the raising of a breeze on the deck of his own vessel. " Why then," he at length said, " if so be that Edmund Champion, and those of his crew, have been made to dance, like St. Vitus, without a footing, to the tune of muffled bells,* I will warrant me the lads who

* Bells were often muffled, so as to give them a dead sound, at the execution of pirates. Perhaps Captain Noseworthy alludes to this custom.

shipped them over the water are in jeopardy. Pray, Master Cuthbert, can you tell me any news of one Luke Kirby, master and commander of a galliasse taken from the French, ycleped the Bonaventura? I would fain know what has been his fate, since his ship and mine have weathered many a hard gale together, and have walked the high seas, as it were, hand in hand."

"Captain Luke Kirby," replied Cuthbert Mayne, "has been hanged, drawn, and quartered, on the double charges of piracy and treason."

Here Captain Noseworthy gave a second long whistle. "And his lieutenant?" said he.

"Thomas Van Hynke, you mean, I suppose," answered Cuthbert.

"The same," said Noseworthy.

"Gone to heaven, or elsewhere, like a rocket," continued Cuthbert; "burnt for a Dutch Anabaptist in Smithfield; which saved the government the trouble of indicting him for high treason."

"He had smelt tar," said Noseworthy, "ever since he was a little boy a hand high. But I little thought they would have burnt Thomas Van Hynke like an old black pitched

barrel. But you see what it is not to follow a comfortable religion. Now we, of the Romish church, make all things convenient: for, when times grow desperate, we sea rovers save ourselves in the best way we can; and when we can, we grow honest fellows again. And who shall deny us absolution for the sins of necessity? Necessity is like a new cloak laid over a ragged jerkin, it hideth the nakedness of the man."

"The news you bring is bad indeed," said Standwich, who had now sufficiently recovered himself to speak. "But what of Desmond? Has the noble Earl received the forces which his holiness of Rome and the king of Spain landed in the west of Ireland?"

"The latest news received in London," replied Cuthbert, "was, that the Spaniards had joined Desmond, seized a fort near the coast, torn down the banner of Elizabeth, and erected that of his holiness instead. But Grey, Earl of Wilton, soon dispersed them, and not a man was left to tell the story of his defeat."

"I see how it is," said Standwich, greatly agitated, "we are ruined for want of combination. What matters it if a party rise in Ireland, whilst another in the North or the West

of England is but thinking of *preparation*? And whilst our gallant friends in London adventure their lives, and by the very boldness of their zeal, lose them; here I lie, hidden in the earth, tampering with churls, working on the minds of outlaws, so that they may join our cause heart and hand when the discontented faction of the West shall rise in arms, and he who I thought would take the field to lead them on is now losing time and occasion by tampering with the dotard citizens of London. Death! it is past bearing. I looked on Sir Thomas Morlay as our own, and he comes not near us. I must leave England, I must warn our friends in France, in Spain, in the Low Countries, of these failures. One bold and daring blow must be struck, or all our hopes will wither one by one."

"For the present you had best fly indeed," said Cuthbert Mayne, "since it has been proclaimed, by order of the Queen and Council, that all jesuits, seminary priests, and others holding, at any time, orders under the Bishop of Rome, who may be found lurking within these realms forty days after the proclamation, be they never so disguised as gentlemen, yeomen, serving-men, or what not, shall become liable to suffer the penalties of high treason."

“ I care not,” said Standwich. “ If I fly, it will not be from fear ; but in the hope that, by present flight, I may become more useful hereafter. If the forfeit of my life could assist the cause in which I am embarked, if it could be the means but once more to plant the triple cross in England, and give Mary of Scotland freedom and a throne, I would frankly cast it down, and hold it worthily spent.”

“ Nay, now, for my part,” said Captain Noseworthy, “ I am not a cock of that feather. If I can turn out the queen of clubs to bring in the queen of hearts, well and good. If there must be fighting, why bring us broadside to broadside, and I say well and good again. And as for religion, I would rather have a good thundering *De profundis* from a blythe red-faced friar, who looks as if he thought all water holy, and therefore never drinks a drop of it, than listen to one of those lack-a-daisy, lean, snivelling snuffling fellows, that sing their prayers through the nose, turn up their eyes like a duck against thunder, and denounce jolly dogs like me, who love old sack, young women, and a bright Bess in my pouch, if got by sea or land. But as for laying down my life, and hanging, and bowelling, and quartering for the nonce,

I have too much the bowels of compassion so to deal by my own flesh and blood; and rather than do this, why I would let your Scotch queen, and Don John, and Don Philip dance to the devil in a coranto together, and make my Swallow spread her wings, sky-scrapers and all, for the service of Elizabeth."

"You serve Elizabeth!" said Cuthbert Mayne in a tone of contempt to the half drunken Captain, "you, who are known for a pirate throughout the four seas."

"You lie," cried Noseworthy; "lie in the throat for a foul-mouthed railer—I am a free gentleman sea-rover, and one who in his day has seen as many parts of the globe as there are points in the card. Elizabeth will gain, as I may say, a polar star for her navy if she gains me—and so, here's her health, for she is a brave old girl after all, and manages to keep her head above water, and to countermine and blow up her enemies as fast as they lay a train for her."

"You are drunk, Captain, to talk thus," said Cuthbert, "else your words were an insult in this place."

"Nabal is his name, and folly is with him," said the Jew, "and Nabal's heart was merry within him for he was drunken with wine."

“What’s that you say, old Isaac?” cried Noseworthy.

“I did but repeat a verse of holy writ,” replied the Jew, “seeing that in Scripture there is much written to shew us what is wicked as well as what is good, that we may despise the fool and babbler when we meet him.”

“Do you mean that for me, you bundle of old clothes and money-bags?” cried Noseworthy. “Be civil, or I’ll break your head. And as for what this Cuthbert says, I’ll knock him down flat as a flounder if he dares to name me and pirate with the same jaws.”

“Why, who but thee, man,” said Cuthbert, “robbed the Earl of Worcester’s ship, when he crossed from England to France to stand sponsor for Elizabeth, to the child of Charles the Ninth?”

“Pshaw!” exclaimed Noseworthy, “that was nothing, I tell you, nothing but a small mistake. I did but board the Earl’s ship in a fog, and stole a caudle-cup and a couple of spoons, and so hindered a nobleman of England from playing the part of dry nurse and gossip to a crowned babe. And the people of England swore it was well done, since Elizabeth had no business to promise Christian amity for a young

prince whose father and grandam had just before cut the throats of the Protestants on the day of St. Bartholomew."

"Elizabeth is proud, deceitful, vain-glorious, and ambitious," said Standwich, "and——"

"But too wise, as I take it," continued the prating Noseworthy, "to be gulled by such as we are, after all. As for myself, I have half a mind to be wise in time, and to pull up along aside of her while I may."

"Your service would not be accepted," said Cuthbert, "and you would only get yourself hanged, were you desperate enough to betray us."

"I scorn your words—I betray nobody," cried Noseworthy; "but as to my services not being accepted—what would you wager of that? Why I tell you that I have served under Drake in old times. He and I took and rifled Vera Cruz. And it was I who hawled Sir Francis up the great tree of the Symerons, when he beheld, at one view, the North and South Atlantic Oceans, just like a couple of buckets of water, one on either side of him. I singed the beard of the King of Fess at Mogadore, drove sheep as big as cows, with tails two yards and a half long from the Tarapaca, preached a ser-

mon to the Chicatau Indians, and pickled a rod for the Dey of Algiers. I have done great things in my time, I promise you. And I have served too under Forbisher and Raleigh, and sad dogs they were, for Forbisher loaded his ship with dross and flint stones, and swore it was ore of virgin gold. And as for the other, he took note of me, and so learnt behaviours ere he went to court."

"Pshaw!" said Cuthbert Mayne, "have done with this bragging, and do tell us when thy vessel will be in readiness to bear Standwich across the seas. He must once more seek our friends abroad, whilst I beat up the game in the west."

"Better take a turn at thy old vocation, Master Cuthbert," said Noseworthy; "beat up thy lather of soap in thy barber's basin, and once more hang out thy signal of the long pole and red ribands, to denote shaving and bleeding done within on man and beast; better this, than to meddle with things that will bring thee to the gallows. No no, never let a landsman attempt to overturn kingly or queenly rule; for if he does, he is sure to go by the board. It is your seaman who knows how to manage the helm of the bark of a kingdom. He spreads

her sails before the full breeze of popularity ; tacks to catch a side-wind of policy ; takes sea-room when the times are blowing up a hurricane ; hangs out false colours to deceive a foe, and carries the lantern in the poop as a guide for the little cock-boats of the courtiers. No no, search heaven and earth for a ruler, and give me one who can sound, fathom, reef, and steer ; and make his ship of state spin round the globe, as this cursed old hole of a cave now seems to dance round me. Why Standwich, man, Standwich, thou art so busied in thy crazy plots that thou hast drunk, man, as princes wed, by proxy, and I have quaffed thy potion and my own too ; yet we are all sober, saving that the Jew there is as drunk as a Christian, and can't stand steady."

" I drunk !" said Levi, " I have tasted but one cup of thy canaries, tempered with the waters of the fountain, since the sun-rising to the sun-etting of this blessed day. My thoughts were with the hopes of our people, and employed in considering how many shekels so poor a man as I am, could give towards building again the temple of Solomon."

" Thou art no Solomon, Jew, thyself," said Noseworthy, " for how wilt thou build temples,

who have no corner of the earth that can be called thy country? Keep thy money, old Sheva, and spend it in a more Christian-like way. Give a candlestick to the altar of St. Nicholas, for thou hast long worshipped him, under a Hebrew name. Or if thou hast no heir, endow a caravansera, as they do in the East, to supply thirsty travellers, like me, with ale and sack; and we will baptize the Jew Christian though the devil stand sponsor for his truth. Come, be generous, old Levi; be a generous Jew, and I will give thee the kiss of peace." So saying, the drunken captain, in the extremity of his humour, attempted to rise to give Levi a brotherly hug; but being unable to stand steady, he reeled and caught hold of the back of a settle. "What a sea is running to-night!" cried Noseworthy, "and I have been ashore so long, that I have not yet found my sea legs. Oh, thou most drunken Jew! how thou dost reel and stagger before my eyes! Go sleep thee sober, Sheva, and take example of me. Never touch a pottle pot after thou hast drunk down to the fifth hoop; for if thou dost, 'tis at the peril of thy five senses. Standwich—Cuthbert—State ministers—cut-throats—great amongst the little, and little amongst the great

—ye are all as drunk as land lubbers need be. Bear a hand and help me to lie down, for my head and my legs are somewhat totty. Give us t'other cup for a night-cap. Levi count your beads, and Standwich don't forswear bacon, and you'll both be in a right way for saints: and so I say, a good morrow to you all."

The drunken pirate was led off to a couch composed of moss and dried fern, in another recess of the cavern. Soon after, Levi, who also was to pass this night in the rock, retired to his pallet, and composed himself to rest; whilst Standwich and Cuthbert Mayne, and one or two others in their especial confidence, held a council as to the management of their desperate affairs, which, in due place and time, will be made known to the reader, since, whatever their determinations might be, it was not yet that they could carry them into action.

CHAPTER IV.

O, it is monstrous ! monstrous !——

Methought, the billows spoke and told me of it ;
The winds did sing it to me ; and the thunder,
That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounc'd
The name of Prosper.

SHAKSPEARE.

STANDWICH at length retired to a separate cell, formed still deeper within the recesses of the cavern. He entered it alone, placed the lamp which he carried in his hand upon a small table, and then proceeded to examine his pistols, as he constantly kept them near him during his hours of rest. Having found that all was in readiness, in case any necessity might occur to render them useful, he next carefully deposited his papers in a small box that stood within a niche cut in the side of the rock, where also might be seen his crucifix, writing materials, and a few books, with other things belonging to this singular man.

The news which had been communicated to Standwich by Cuthbert Mayne was of a nature

to excite every energy of his enthusiastic mind. He saw the dearest hopes inspired by that religion, for which he was so zealous, fearfully shaken; whilst many of his secret friends and adherents, who, like himself, were ready to lay down their lives to restore the captive Mary, and to place her on the throne of England, had completely failed, and several had perished miserably. Still his active and daring mind was not to be daunted, either by present failure or future difficulty, and he instantly turned his thoughts to form new schemes for action, and, as a preliminary step, to arrange the mode of his departure, so that he might communicate with those treacherous and foreign powers, who sent so many miserable agents into England, of all kinds and degrees, to stir up strife and hold intelligence with the disaffected.

In this anxious frame of mind, Standwich at length threw himself upon a couch composed of dried fern and moss, and, without removing any part of his apparel, excepting the iron casing of his breast, cast his cloak over him, and endeavoured to sleep. He did so, but nature refused to afford him that quiet rest which can alone be the result of peace of mind and of conscience. Frightful visions haunted

his pillow. At one moment he fancied himself engaged in a tumult, where he was beset on all sides with enemies desirous to take his life. At another, he fancied he saw a female form, who beckoned him to follow her ; but, whenever he attempted to do so, eluded his pursuit, till, when he at length came up with her, and would have clasped her to his bosom, she became a skeleton in his arms. Then again he was at sea, and the drunken pirate was by his side, swearing and brawling ; the ship was tossed by a tempest, and he tried to gain the boat to save himself, but could never reach her. Something white floated near him, the waves came rushing on, and cast it at the feet of Standwich ; he stooped to take it up, and, on uncovering the object, found it to be a child stained with blood. Standwich struggled almost to suffocation in his sleep, and at length cried out in his dream “ Margaret ! Margaret ! spare the babe ! strike the guilty, the child is innocent ! ”

He awoke, looked wildly around, and filled with a confused and undefined sense of terror (the constant, though often unconscious attendant of all who live expecting sudden danger), snatched up one of the pistols from the head of his couch, and, seeing a dusky figure

bending over his bed, not knowing who this intruder might be at such an hour, presented the instrument of death. His arm was instantly and forcibly arrested, and, ere he could be sufficiently recovered, or even awake, to act with sure effect or to learn the cause of this intrusion, he was disarmed. This was the work of a moment; and the person who dealt thus unceremoniously, laid finger upon lip to denote silence. Standwich once more became himself, collected his disturbed senses, and recognised that his midnight visitant was Betsy Grimal. He asked her for what purpose she sought him at such an hour.

“For none that is good,” said the woman. “For when will aught but evil pass between thee and me, George Standwich? A curse dogs us both, in spite of our hardened spirits. Who sleeps in the cave yonder that draws so heavy a breath, and keeps time to it with snoring like a churl after a day’s ploughing?”

“It is the pirate captain,” replied Standwich. “He came here to-night when you were absent.”

“The better for you that he is at hand,” said Betsy, “if his vessel too be in readiness—And who sleeps yonder among the bean-stalks?”

“ Levi, the Jew,” answered Standwich ; “ he brought hither to-night the silver ore that he has refined for our people, that it might be ready for the foreign market on the first opportunity to convey it abroad. It was too late to turn him back ; at cock-crowing he will depart.”

“ They sleep as sound,” said Betsy, “ as if I had mixed their potions. Rise up, George Standwich ; I have news for you, which, possibly, you will not like to hear.”

“ Speak it, woman,” answered the outlawed rebel, “ I will not rise, I will rest me here the while.”

“ You will not rest there, I tell you,” said Betsy Grimbal, “ for my words shall be as the steel to flint, they shall strike fire from thy sluggard soul.”

“ What mean you, woman ?” inquired Standwich. “ Has the sheriff obtained information of my lurking place ? will he be down upon me with a warrant from the council, and an army of bills to support him ? I care not, I am prepared for resistance. Who is my enemy ?”

“ It is thy old, thy worst enemy, thou hast to fear,” replied Betsy. “ Has Sir Hugh Fitz any place in thy memory ?”

“Ha!” exclaimed Standwich, and he started up hastily and continued, “What of him? Curses be upon his name—I would I could for ever forget it.”

“He will speedily give you new cause to remember it,” said Betsy, “since it should seem he is about to wed his only son, John Fitz, to thy daughter.”

Standwich shook with emotion at hearing this startling intelligence, and, as the light of the lamp gleamed full upon his countenance, it shewed it haggard, and white as death. He glared upon the woman who stood before him with strained eyes, and compressing his lips together, said in a tone deep and tremulous with passion, “Do not utter such a sound, do not call her by such a name, as—my daughter! lest these rocks rend asunder, and fall, as the instrument of God’s wrath, upon our heads.—Yet I have done much to appease the anger of heaven; and there are saints whose prayers I have invoked for mercy.—But Fitz, aye, Sir Hugh Fitz, was it not of him you spoke? that apostate, that enemy of God and man, he who has made me what I am, an outcast and a villain; and for whose sake I have vowed a bitter oath of vengeance—you spoke of him; what was it? say on.”

“ Margaret loves his son,” continued Betsy Grimal, “ and is beloved by him. She will become his wife, the wife of John Fitz.”

“ Have I not said it shall not be ?” exclaimed Standwich ; “ and yet,” he continued in a milder tone, “ why should I shackle her free will, or why render her wretched, knowing, as I do, how soon the miserable become the guilty ?”

“ Even so did Sir Hugh and Glanville deal by you, Captain Standwich,” said Betsy Grimal, “ they first broke your true affection for Mary Glanville, hated you, trampled on you, and married her to old Sir John Page for his gold. It was Sir Hugh Fitz who discovered the whole affair. He it was, and only he, who poisoned the mind of Glanville against you ; else what chanced had never befallen you. But we had a dear revenge, and paid them a black debt, in coin that bore upon it the curse of Cain by way of impress.”

“ Peace, woman !” said Standwich, “ would you rouse me to madness by these recollections ? I have not forgot the past, and need not to be goaded with remembrances that strike fiercer agony into my soul than could a viper’s tooth into my flesh. I have not forgot my own injuries, though years have rolled between me

and the gulph they opened. Each circumstance lives in my memory as fresh as at the hour it was acted, to curse me ; yet my thoughts are as sound now as they were then—my feelings as acute, my shame as deep, my wrongs as heavy, and my hatred ten-fold deeper. *That* at least has grown with time, like usury when it doubles the first debt. I want no recollections to be pressed on me to make me act as a man. How know you that these things which you tell me concerning Margaret are true ?”

“ Lady Howard,” said Betsy Grimbald, “ whose wealth might win princes to become wooers, and who has sought my services—she told me all ; and she has the means to know all, and that truly.”

“ Could I have believed,” said Standwich, “ that the vengeance of heaven would have prepared for me a scourge like this, I had never consented that my child, that Margaret, should have been given to the care of Glanville. Yet what could I do ? Outlawed in England, a price set upon my head, bankrupted in fortune, without a home, and in danger of the laws that here hourly threaten me with death, where else could I consent that she should be placed ? France was a scene of civil strife and bloodshed ;

my kinsman, Sir Frederick Champernoun, on his death-bed, he too as poor and almost as friendless as myself; there was not a man on earth, but Glanville, with whom he could have prevailed to shelter the head of Margaret from the impending perils that hung over her. But how little did Glanville dream, when he consented to the charge, that it was the daughter of his *own daughter*, who, in the innocent person of Margaret, came helpless to his bosom. And now must I step in to dash the cup of happiness from her lips, even as it was dashed from mine."

"Remember," said Betsy Grimbal. "Would you have your child take to her bosom the son of him who brought you down to shame, to misery, and anguish?"

"Cursed woman," cried Standwich, "be still—do not urge me to a deed of horror; do not make me, as you have been, guilty of—"

"Of what?" said Betsy, "Why shudder? speak out."

"Of murder!" said Standwich, and he looked blank with horror as he spoke.

"Aye of murder!" re-echoed Betsy Grimbal: and she struck one hand within the other, and continued in a tone of exultation: "Yes, it

was I—it was I who helped the deed—the miserable wretch whose life was in his gold, who would have grudged to a dying fellow-being the comfort of a drop of water to cool his thirst, but that the clouds send rain at no man's cost. Yes! that sordid wretch, who used his wife like a slave, and me, her attendant, like the slave of a slave; I did help him to his coffin, and the earth itself looked greener and fresher to my view when it was no longer trodden by his foot. But wherefore upbraid me with the deed? Remember that if I and my miserable mistress laid the hand of death upon Sir John Page, the means by which we did so were of thy own devising.”

“ I know it,” cried Standwich; “ that is a truth which never slumbers. The night-howling tempest, or the lightest sigh of morning's breath, alike repeat to me the name of murderer. There is no place, no thought, no action but conscience makes her hell. The horrid crime was devised by me in moments of passion, of madness. Yet you may remember I recalled my purpose, and even intreated that the worthless husband of her I loved might be spared.”

“ Yes,” said Betsy Grimbal, “ but your change of purpose came too late. The wretch

was in the death struggle, with gasping breath, and straining eyes, convulsed in agony, when you made the signal under our window to bid us forbear. You threw up the sand, crying ‘*for God’s sake hold your hand!*’ but the hand of death had made sure work already. You should have repented before it came to that pass. He who spares the victim, sheathes the knife before it reeks with blood.”

“Oh, would to God it had been so!” said Standwich, “for guilt, like the flood that breaks its bounds, keeps no confines, leaps every barrier, and rushes in tumult down its own wild course. *This* I should have done—I should have shunned the first step to evil; for who that breaks God’s laws shall dare to say to his own soul, ‘here will I pause?’—No, sin is that gulph from which there is no retreat. If once we pass within its vortex, darkness and death surround the wretch on every side, and no man sorrows for his fate. It was my first crime that led to the last. Had I renounced the woman I loved, when she could no longer be mine with honesty, it had been well.”

“You thought different when you took such pains to win her from the wretch she married,” said Betsy.

“ I did,” replied Standwich, “ for I gave no rule to passion. And passion, that fiend, who sometimes visits us in the form of an angel of light, but leads on in her train jealousy, revenge, pride—aye pride—which made even the spirits of heaven to curse their Maker, that bad power was my ruin. Passion conquered all, and, like a merciless destroyer, never left the victim till death usurped her rule. I loved Glanville’s daughter, loved her after she was the wife of Sir John Page, and triumphed over him by bearing his wife from her home, from the arms of a husband to those of a betrayer. Yet this was but the beginning of evils; then think what followed !”

“ Nothing fearful could have followed,” said Betsy Grimal, “ had not Sir Hugh Fitz busied himself to your undoing. By his unceasing efforts, even after you had secreted my unhappy mistress for more than a year, Sir Hugh discovered the place of your retreat—you forget he was the agent of all that rendered you most miserable.”

“ I do not forget it,” cried Standwich; “ he was my evil genius in all things, my unrelenting enemy. It was Sir Hugh Fitz who first warned Glanville of my suit to his daughter, when that

suit was innocent. It was he who exposed to him the follies of my youth, to make the father think me unworthy of his child. And when I won her through guilt and danger, it was Sir Hugh Fitz who dragged her from my arms to restore her to those of her wretched husband; and what is more than all—Oh heaven, can I—can I ever forget, that it was by *his* watchful spirit, by *his* busy, meddling evidence, that the miserable being I had plunged in guilt was suspected, accused, and suffered for the crime of—murder!”

“Such remembrances would stir up the very stones to vengeance,” said Betsy Grimal. “And will you ever suffer the son of this man to wed your daughter?”

“Peace, woman, peace,” said Standwich, “Margaret is innocent. Call her not *my* daughter. The miserable offspring of my lawless love knows nothing of the horrid secret of her birth. She thinks herself the child of an honest man now in his grave—how I wished that grave had been mine.”

“And what if Margaret did know herself to be thy daughter?” said Betsy Grimal.

“The very thought of such a father would pollute her innocent soul with crime,” replied

Standwich, “for she would curse me—and what man who is not savage, could bear the curses of his child? To have the creature he had fondled in his bosom in infancy, when the helpless thing was pure and meek as the dove, to have *her* now look up in his face, and there read nothing but confusion, shame, and sin! No, no, amidst all the evils that follow the bad man, as whips for the scourge of his sin, *this* would be the greatest. She shall never know me for her father—for if she did, may be she would ask me to point to her the grave of her mother. How could I bear *that*?—Yes, a pious daughter would ask to drop a tear upon the sod that wraps the clay in which her own was formed—and when I should take her by the hand, and should lead her to some green turf, surrounded by the quiet sanctity of death—then think, how deep, how fearful would be a daughter’s shame, did I, instead of this, say to her, ‘Thy mother suffered as a common felon, nay worse, for she was guilty of treason! and perished at the stake—and thou, thou art the child of dishonour, the child of a murderess! She has no grave, for her very ashes, burnt and consumed, have been mingled with the common dust, as too accursed to rest in holy ground—and I, the

miserable cause of all, I live to tell thee thou art the child of murder." At these words Standwich threw himself upon his bed, covered his face with his hands, and seemed even to writhe with the agony of his feelings.

"Fool!" exclaimed Betsy Grimal; "rise up, be a man. Will all the waters of the salt sea wash out the memory of the past? You know they cannot. How far less, then, thy tears? Rise up, and do not be like the coward who dares devise a thing, but never acts it."

"Wicked woman!" said Standwich, "you forget who you are, and what you deserve. You are indebted to me for that life which is due to the violated laws of your country."

"Tell the world so, George Standwich," exclaimed Betsy Grimal, "and see how long thy own head rests upon thy shoulders. Tell them this is Betsy Grimal, who assisted her mistress, my paramour, the Lady Page, in the murder of her husband. And when you do so, forget not to add that Betsy, when she escaped from the hand of justice, that would have held her on the same charge for which her mistress was condemned, then, even then she stole for me my child, brought my infant daughter safe to my arms, at an hour when, had I but shewn

my head abroad, there was not a hair of it but was forfeited to the laws."

"Yes, woman," said Standwich, "hardened, wicked, and miserable as you are, I owe you one debt that even I will acknowledge. You brought to me my infant child; else I had never dared to claim her, nor could I have ever hoped to see her more. It was, too, by thy means that I conveyed her safe to the care of Sir Frederick Champernoun, my half-brother, who consented to receive, to acknowledge her as his own child, in the hope by doing so to bury in oblivion the infamy of her birth. And he, that brother, that only faithful friend, is no more. Oh what recollections are these! When I think how many dear friends I had in early life, how honoured, how happy was my condition—and now what is it?"

"A tame, a spiritless existence," said Betsy Grimal; "a man who feeling for ever the goad of conscience, has neither the power to welcome its pangs, nor to defy them."

"Insolent woman!" exclaimed Standwich, "who are we that you dare this unwonted freedom with me? Am not I the remnant of a noble, though fallen man; and thou but a miserable beggar, a cheat, a common thief, who wast once

the indulged waiting-woman of the guilty Lady Page? What has placed us on a line that you dare thus address me?"

"You have done it," said Betsy Grimbal; "he who makes another the partner of his villainous secrets, and the sharer in his crimes, destroys all the land-marks of distance that might heretofore have stood between them. I am thy equal now, and cast me off if you dare."

"Out of my sight," said Standwich, "leave me. I know not if it be permitted by heaven, or if the devil has stirred you on to this, but you have this night called up such remembrances, such shadows of guilt before my sight, that my very soul is filled with horrors—I could be dangerous; a word would make me—"

"What would it make thee?" said Betsy in a tone of defiance. "Aye, snatch up thy pistol; add another murder to the catalogue of thy daily crimes, 'twill be a new subject for penitence. And let thy next crime be the death of her, who even now watches over thy head to shelter it from justice. But look you, George Standwich, ere you attack the she-wolf, beware her fangs. I will not die tamely; and I am armed as well as thou art." She drew forth a pistol as she spoke, from under her cloak, cocked

it with the utmost deliberation, and pointing it to Standwich, said in a marked tone of irony, "Come, prepare, say, who shall have the first fire? I can take aim at a mark as steadily as thou."

"I am a fool," said Standwich, "thus to bandy words with a woman. Put up your weapon, I design you no harm; my thoughts were bent on a being more loathed in my own sight than thou art; I thought of George Standwich when I spoke of death."

"Think of him then as you should do," exclaimed Betsy Grimbald; "think of him as a man who has warmth, blood, life, and motion, that may do much to serve both himself and others, and couple the thought of death with that of his foes. Leave these vain regrets to snivelling priests. Talk no more of death; leave him to batten on his household spoils, and remember it is the living who do good or evil; it is the living who can curse, who can avenge, it is the living who can hope to overturn a kingdom. I will talk to thee of these detested rulers of the land, of Sir Hugh Fitz—that is a theme to rouse thee."

"To-morrow," said Standwich, "to-morrow; I will hear no counsel till then."

"But I will counsel you," continued Betsy;

“ I have bought the right to counsel you at no common price. Remember, it was by serving you with the Lady Page, that I became a partner in that ruin which overtook you both. In civil society I had nothing to hope ; my life was in danger, and I took shelter amongst the lowest wretches that burrow, like beasts, within the earth. I persuaded these people to receive you when every door was closed upon you. I have watched days and nights when danger has lurked near you ; and once, at the peril of my own life, I stood between you and death. Have I not the right to give you counsel ? ”

“ And what counsel would you now urge ? ” said Standwich ; “ there is such malice in your words, such bitter recollections arise from your counsel, that it comes as unwelcome as that given by the gaoler, when he bids the criminal to plead, even though he plead guilty, to save himself the agony of being pressed to death, by receiving his quietus from the axe. What is it you would have me do ? ”

“ Revenge yourself on Fitz,” said Betsy Grimbal. “ Contrive some means to destroy the hopes of his son ; that will be as a sharp iron, ten times heated, piercing through his heart ; Fitz lives but in his son. Render him miserable,

and you destroy the father ; and Margaret must never be his wife ! And, if all other means fail, let thy own hand do the work."

" Fiend !" exclaimed Standwich ; " you, who look neither woman nor man, would you have me again satisfy my resentment at the price of blood ?"

" No," said Betsy ; " not till all else failed. Sir Hugh Fitz has been the cruel persecutor of thee and thine : will you, then, suffer this affection to thrive—this marriage to go forward between his child and your's ?"

" No," said the outlaw ; " my blood shall never mingle itself with that of Fitz, though I should forfeit life in the attempt to prevent it. Let me think. The plan is dangerous ; yet there is no other. I will adventure it ; and if *that* fails, I would rather see her dead than wedded to the son of one so accursed. I will arrange the means, I will attempt it. In a few days I quit this coast, to return, I trust, with better hopes, once more to plant the banner of Rome within these realms, to free the Scottish queen, to join her friends heart and hand, and lead her on to triumph. In this cause I live ; else what were life to me, who can find no peace on earth, and scarcely dare to hope for it in heaven ?"

“ Your hopes of heaven !” said Betsy Grimal ; “ strife, bloodshed, and rebellion, are your hopes. Well, it may be so with those of your faith. The followers of mine look to find peace as well as you after death ; but our hopes are more secure, they rest in that long, dead sleep, which shall hear no trumpet call to judgment.”

“ Infidel !” cried Standwich ; “ hold thy peace, lest the rocks fall on thee to crush thy blaspheming head.”

“ No, no,” said Betsy ; “ they are too firmly set in the bosom of this harlot earth, that embraces all who take refuge in her arms. I have been better taught than to fear the shadows of superstition.”

“ Your mind,” said Standwich, “ has indeed been schooled beyond your degree ; but how have you employed it ?”

“ I will tell you, George Standwich,” she continued. “ I have used the powers of my mind as soldiers do their weapons, as arms given me for attack or defence, as the times or my own safety required. And what do I more than others ? You have branded me with the name of murderess. Look into the world ; are not kings murderers ? How many heads have fallen to satisfy suspicion, when it is of royal

birth ? Where is the husband of your Scottish queen, for whose sake you would risk life ? Who found Darnley a grave ? Had he not one devised by a wife ? and furnished with fire, aye, fire such as makes the fuel of the damned, if thy creed be true."

"The world itself is a destroyer," said Standwich, "and man preys on man."

"Aye, and by lingering means," cried Betsy Grimal. "The law drags a man by its slow toils to misery and famine ; your physician poisons him, and takes payment and credit for the deed ; and if a wretch have but a few coins left, your alchymist ruins him with the dream of unbounded riches. All men are murderers. Your duellist strikes, and calls it honour. Your soldier cuts throats for a groat a-day, and your deceiver kills the body through the mind. No, there is but one honest kind of murder, and that is done by him who gives an open and a swift means of death."

Whilst Betsy Grimal, whose power to work upon the soul of another to do evil was almost equal to her will, thus vehemently harangued Standwich, he stood with folded arms in deep meditation, completely absorbed in the subject so pressed upon his attention by this cruel and

infamous woman, who had been to him, for many years, like an evil genius, that hovered near to tempt him to sin and misery. His mind seemed now to turn upon the thoughts of his daughter, as he half-spoke, half-murmured, in a low voice, the following words: "Never, whilst I have breath, she shall never know the fatal secret of her birth, lest she should ask me why I had not stifled her existence in its first hour, and saved her from living to curse the author of her being. I will preserve the guiltless character of her mind; yes, I will have one pure spirit my friend, one who with raised hands, with eyes meek in innocence, to lift them in the morning light to heaven in holy prayer, and in such orisons to invoke mercy in the name of George Standwich. No day shall pass but Margaret shall breathe such prayers for me before its close. No, my dear child, cast, like a helpless blossom in a fatal hour, into this bleak world, she shall still flourish fresh in her native innocence, without so much as the knowledge of evil. May heaven forgive me my deep sins, and pour its blessings on the head of my guiltless child."

Tears dropt from the eyes of Standwich as he spoke, and he bent his head upon his bosom.

A moment after, he looked up, and his eyes encountered those of Betsy Grimal, who stood watching his countenance with an expression in her own of the most cunning penetration, her dark eye glimmering beneath its deep black brow, like a coal kindling into fire.

Standwich started at observing the sinister expression of her countenance, and exclaimed—"I see it, woman. You watch the moment of returning passion—call it frenzy if you will—to work me to the murder of my enemy; but it shall not avail. Leave me; I insist that you leave me. I will act as a man, as a father; but I will not touch a hair of Fitz's head in bodily harm. Begone—no more."

Betsy Grimal retreated, and the miserable man, torn by a conflict of evil passions and half-repentant feelings, that by turns mastered his mind, now threw himself once more upon his couch, and vainly endeavoured to find rest.

CHAPTER V.

Old age laments

His vigour spent. A chosen few
Alone the sport enjoy, nor droop beneath
Their pleasing toils. Here, huntsman, from this height
Observe.

SOMERVILLE.

THAT passion for the chase, so beautifully described in the poem from which we have extracted the above lines—a passion at all times inherent in the bosom of Englishmen, reigned in full vigour in the breasts of the gentry and yeomanry who inhabited the neighbourhood of Tavistock at the date of our narrative. And the ladies also often shared in these sports of the field, sometimes pursuing the noble stag, as the object of the hunt; and at others, chasing the skulking fox through deep vales and over rugged heights. Hunting, in all places, perhaps, attended with some degree of personal risk, becomes even perilous in the county of Devon, on account of the mountainous character of the land, the sudden interruptions of rock, the height

of the hedges, formed by banks of earth and stone, covered with luxuriant bushes, the abruptness of the declivities, and the endless number of rivers, rivulets, and torrents.

Yet the chase, from the earliest times, appears to have been a favourite diversion in this county, not neglected even by the church; a hunting-seat being in existence at the present day, which was erected by the Abbot of Tavistock, in order to afford him the enjoyment of so invigorating a recreation, after the less lively, and somewhat monotonous duties of his station. Morwel House—for so was this hunting-seat called—is situated near the far-famed rocks of that name.

The building is of stone and in the pointed style of gothic architecture, quadrangular in form, with a gateway much resembling that of the Abbey of Tavistock. It lay embosomed in the midst of venerable trees; and, though now a solitude in every sense of the word, was once the scene of social festivity, when the merry monks left all penance behind them within the abbey walls, and gaily sallied forth at the notes of the horn, prepared to run down the dappled deer, upon whose fat sides they promised themselves an ample re-

fection ; shouted and whooped with glee as the woods rang with the clamour of blowing the stag to bay, or at the triumph of the mort-note.

When the Abbey was dismantled, and the monks driven out by Cromwel, Earl of Essex, in the reign of Henry VIII., that prince bestowed the abbey lands on the Earl of Bedford ; so that Morwel House became the property of the Russel family. It was by their indulgence that it was now inhabited by Sir Nicholas Slanning, who, young, active, and reckless of danger, enjoyed with peculiar delight the exercise of the chase. He had therefore been desirous to reside in this mansion, since it lay in a neighbourhood so convenient for hunting. On the very day after the event recorded in our last chapter, Sir Nicholas was to pursue his favourite sport, in company with Sir Hugh Fitz, his son John, and several of the neighbouring gentry.

The fox, that wily enemy to the farmer, was on this day to be the object of their sport ; and at an early hour all were assembled in readiness. The hunters, attired in Lincoln green, then the usual colour worn in field sports, appeared, with health, joy, and expectation, imprinted in the liveliest colours in the face of each ; while their horses, impatient for the chase, were with diffi-

culty held in, and tossed their heads, snorted, and champed the bit, with an expectation little less eager than that of their masters. The jolly huntsman, his own face red as the morning sun, his baldrick and horn, the emblem of his calling, suspended round his neck, led on the clustering hounds, some of which came leaping and bounding forward, now and then uttering an impatient bark, or whining, in token of their joyous expectation of the sport. Here and there a straggler slunk back, and seemed to turn a longing eye to the kennel, till his courage was invigorated, and he was driven forward to skulk, half-reluctant half-ashamed, amidst the canine crowd, by the lash of the huntsman's whip, that smartly cracked and clanged at every stroke bestowed upon the disobedient curs.

The huntsmen now vaulted into their saddles, and all seemed ready for the start; yet a moment they delayed till an old domestic, who for nearly forty years had performed that service, came forward and offered to each a silver goblet, which from time to time he renewed from a flagon filled with ale, that he carried in the other hand, to supply the stirrup-cup before their departure. Men, horses, hounds, now set forward, each bent on that joyous pastime which

is pursued, in one form or other, as the recreation of almost all nations, and in all ages, and by those of barbarous countries, to supply the necessities of nature.

None but those who have participated in the chase can fully appreciate its delights, its nerve-bracing, soul-invigorating excitement. All care, like the earth over which the huntsman bounds, seems to fly beneath his feet; the past and the future are alike unheeded in the present hour, till the madness of exercise, if it may so be termed, seems to produce that corresponding intoxication of the spirits, that lifts him, as a creature of a lighter element, to breathe in a world all delight, all vigour, all of one pulse, one sensation, and that is joy.

The dew lay glittering on the grass, the air was scented by the balmy breath of morning, and all nature presented that fresh, clear, and lively aspect which seems to speak her welcome to the "sweet hour of prime." Whilst the carol of the woods, where every spray was vocal, or as the feathered tenants soared through the air, joined in one universal melody of rejoicing, sufficient to awaken some sympathetic feeling even in the coldest breast. Through many a deep glen, by many a thick coppice,

and over many a rugged height did the hunters now pursue their sport, whilst the hounds followed on the drag, uttering those intermitted and doubtful cries that shewed their prey was yet uncertain.

In the mean time, the difficulty of the ground was favourable to Renard, who at length, closely beset, and hearing his enemies come rustling upon him through the covert, skulked from his hiding place, and once more trusted to flight for safety, till, grown bold by having distanced the dogs, he carried his brush erect, like a signal of defiance, and, scouring along with a cunning that was instinctive, in the hope to outrun his pursuers, he made for a pool of mire, thinking to drown his own scent in that of its impurity. But it did not avail, the hounds followed close at his heels, as every rocky chasm and every dell echoed to the chorus of their deep-mouthed cries, and to the blasts of the bugle, that now in continued notes proclaimed his flight.

It was now that every hunter rushed forward to keep up with the chase, goring with the spur and urging on the coursers that bore them, as if their own life or death depended on the swiftest flight. In vain did the mountain streams, the rushing torrent, or the abrupt

paths, amid portions of loose and rugged rocks, by turns offer a fearful obstacle to these hardy adventurers. Still they followed, and when, every now and then, as it happened, the impenetrable barrier of a hedge stood between them and the track of the fox, they surmounted it after the custom of the country, namely, by suffering their horse to spring upwards to the top, and thence by a second spring to descend on the other side. At times these hedges were so formidable as to oblige even the most expert hunter to dismount, and to allow his horse to cross alone, whilst the hunter himself merely held the animal by the end of the bridle, and had to find his own way across the hedge as he best could.

The fox, after repeatedly doubling, so as to deceive the pursuit, and after vainly seeking covert, hard pressed by the hounds, at length broke away at full speed, in view of all the sportsmen, and, sweeping down the brow of a steep hill, made towards the banks of the river, where, driven to desperation by the close pursuit of the dogs, he dashed at once into the stream, and swam across it.

There was a moment's pause, till the veteran huntsman who led the van, giving the rein to his horse, and cheering on the dogs with the

encouraging halloa of the field, sprung into the Tamar, determined to pursue the chase, and follow the fox to the death on the Cornish side of the river. The dogs followed, though not with equal rapidity. Some, indeed, more accustomed than their fellows to these aquatic pursuits of the prey, speedily crossed, bounded on shore, and their distant baying proclaimed they had followed hard upon the track of the wily fugitive. Every straggling huntsman now came up, summoned to the spot by the repeated bursts of the bugle that rang far along the banks of the river, and were repeated from rock to rock in a clear and continued echo.

All, save one hunter, determined on crossing the Tamar in pursuit of the chase, and that one was Sir Hugh Fitz, who, though fond of the exercise, and still, from his vigorous and lusty age, able to share in it, had no inclination to venture upon an attempt that was only fitted for the young, hardy, and bold amongst the sportsmen. He suffered them all, therefore, to take the water, and as soon as he had witnessed some who with ease made good their passage and landed, and others who were floundering and curvetting, in infinite danger of being upset or overwhelmed, both man and horse, in the

river, Sir Hugh quietly turned the head of his own beast in the opposite direction ; but, still feeling an interest for the sport, though he could no longer share in it, resolved to observe its progress, and went forward determined to surmount the acclivity, and to take his own station on the bold projection of Morwel rock, a station so commanding, that he could with ease behold from thence the course of the chase amidst the opposite hills of Cornwall.

The scenery around the path followed by Sir Hugh was of a nature truly grand. It consisted principally of bold and towering rocks, here and there rising almost perpendicular. At length he entered a deep and narrow glen, through which rushed in tumult a little foaming torrent, that seemed to fret itself against every obstacle which arose to impede its course towards the river. The path wound near it under a canopy of verdure, formed of trees whose roots started from the interstices of the rock, and appeared to be so slightly supported by any adherence to the earth that every fibre was visible as they strayed and wandered over its surface. At the extremity of the glen, the path ascended abruptly on the very brink of a precipice ; and though the torrent could no

longer be seen, its roar was still audible, and for a time even increased in sound, as if it burst from some concealed cavity near the spot.

Sir Hugh with considerable caution pursued the ascent ; and the sure-footed animal he rode, accustomed to paths that would defy the best city-bred courser, paced on, carefully picking his way, and avoiding both the extremity of the precipice and such loose stones as would render his footing precarious. Between the trees that lay before him Sir Hugh could discover, as through a moving trellis, the deep blue sky ; whilst summit after summit of the neighbouring heights appeared and were lost in alternate succession. At a turn in the path he quitted the precipice, and entered a wood so thick, that, for some time, nothing but the trunks of oak trees, with their long arms covered with moss and festooned with ivy, could be seen, till, on a second turn, he gained the destination he desired, and suddenly reached the bold projection of Morwel rock, where a prospect alike abrupt, unexpected, and magnificent, presented itself to the eye.

Morwel rock rises several hundred feet above the Tamar that flows at its base, and though its apex is beautifully crowned with woods, its

jutting extremity lies bare, without so much as a single branch to intercept the imposing scene around. Looking to the left, from its verge, arise from the bosom of deep woods, rocks piled on rocks, of a magnitude little inferior to its own, broken into cavities of the most picturesque forms; some portions of their surface deep and dark, whilst other portions, brilliant in light, lie covered with purple heath and wild plants. Half-way down, looking to the north, appears a thick coppice, now intersected with a canal of water, that, from this elevated height, seems to run like a glittering thread of silver through the landscape. Rising from the midst of the coppice is seen *Chimney rock*, its pointed pinnacle bearing some resemblance to such an object. The lower part of it also, when viewed from beneath, somewhat resembles the gable end of a house; and, as it is much covered with ivy, the similitude to an artificial structure is the more striking.

Below, the eye, after contemplating with a feeling of awe the wide expanse of air between, at last rests upon the Tamar, which, forming a beautiful reach, wanders magnificently onward, till, many miles hence, it falls into the sea, visiting in its course the opposed banks of Corn-

wall and Devon ; the former, from this station, marked by no leading feature, but presenting that pastoral scene of meadows ever green, so truly English, with the little church of Calstock on a bold eminence, and a cottage or two dispersed here and there, as a lively contrast to the verdure of the fields ; whilst on the other side, Devon rises in the full grandeur of its stupendous rocks, and seems to look down upon the river at its base, as a sovereign who receives but tributary homage from the waters that crouch at its feet.

From the heights of Morwel, every living or moving thing looks but as a speck, as a very atom in the landscape. The sheep are seen to browse on the Cornish side like so many dots on the hills ; and the boats, with their white sails glittering in the sun, as they glide along the surface of the Tamar, look so diminutive as to call up an idea of the barks of fairy-land. One remarkable feature, that may often be noticed, is that contest of flame and smoke, which seems to issue from the bowels of the earth, reminding us of volcanic fires : but is really occasioned by a custom peculiar to these counties, the *burning of bate*, as it is called ; a mode of manuring land, known elsewhere by the name of *den-*

shiring, evidently an abbreviation expressive of the county where it is employed. Looking towards the north, the picturesque arches of New-bridge, the distant woods of Blanchdown, and hills that at the evening hour almost lose their outline in the blue horizon, close in the scene, whence the river is seen to flow, winding through his country of enchantment, where sublimity and beauty are so happily blended, that the mind receives sensations of awe, mingled with delight, where pleasure is not overpowered by fear, as amid alpine wonders, whilst pleasure itself is raised to that higher feeling which results from contemplating natural objects of sublimity.

Sir Hugh, on gaining the wood at the summit of Morwel rock, dismounted, and tying his horse to one of the trees by the bridle rein, determined there to leave the animal, whilst he watched the direction of the hunters from the bold brow of the rock we have just attempted to describe. He did so, and finding himself somewhat fatigued with his morning's exercise, he threw himself upon a portion of stone covered with moss, that formed a convenient seat, and looked around him with a mind by no means insensible to the beauty of the scene, yet, at the present moment, too much engrossed with the

interest he felt for the sportsmen, to give himself up to a contemplative mood.

Whilst thus he sat, he heard the distant bay-ing of the hounds, caught now and then a view of the huntsmen, as they emerged, like moving atomies, from a coppice, or wound round the brow of a hill, their diminished forms sometimes but partially seen, and at others fully visible as they cheered on the deep-mouthed pack to the notes of the "spirit-stirring" horn.

Having watched for some time the progress of the chase, Sir Hugh at length heard steps behind him. He started, and, on turning his head to see who might be the intruder, beheld a man of an athletic form, wearing a morion on his head, and a corslet of steel upon his breast, armed both with sword and pistols. The figure stood still, remained silent, but fixed an earnest and impressive look on Sir Hugh.

The worthy knight, who was by no means prepared to encounter such a formidable apparition, instantly recollected, to add to his terror, there was no means of retreat, since the stranger stood between him and that narrow and only pathway which led into the wood. On every other side lay the fearful precipice. His alarm increased, his teeth chattered, and a tremulous

motion, too strong to be concealed, seized his whole frame, as he stammered forth a good morrow, in the hope to propitiate this intruder, who he instantly set down in his own mind (and true enough was the conjecture) could be no other than one of those lawless miners and villains, that lived, in part, by cheating the revenues of the crown, and, for the rest, by open violence and plunder.

Deeply did Sir Hugh now censure in his heart the folly which had caused him thus incautiously to venture on such a spot alone. And so wholly was he unnerved at the moment, that, had he stood on the verge of the precipice which was near him, the slightest breath of air might have upset his equilibrium, and have consigned him to the abyss below. For some time, the formidable stranger seemed to enjoy, with a malicious triumph, the terror he had excited, till at length Sir Hugh mustered sufficient courage to rise from his seat, and made an effort to pass on toward the wood. In this he was opposed, for the stranger intercepted his progress, and motioned with his hand that he should remain where he was.

Sir Hugh had recourse to expostulation, and said in a mild tone, " Friend, if such you are,

I would entreat you to let me pass into yonder wood. There I have tied up my horse, and my people will be here to look for me anon; my business is not with you."

"But mine is with you," replied Standwich, for it was the outlawed captain who spoke. "I have watched for you, I have traced your steps hither, and on this spot you shall hear me—listen then."

"I—I—I cannot," stammered out Sir Hugh, "I can no longer tarry. Let me pass on. This detention is contrary to law, and liable to the penalty under the proclamation of her gracious Majesty of the present reign, for it is enacted——"

"Fool!" cried the Captain, "of what avail are laws here?—Talk of thy proclamations, and penal codes to the kite and the carion bird, that shall find their prey on what is left of thee, should I but put forth my strength against thy feeble age, and cast thee hence into the abyss below, where thy body shall be crushed out of the very form of what is human—a mass of broken atoms!"

"Holy Mary!" exclaimed Sir Hugh, who in his terror forgot that he was now of the reformed church, "you would not dare—you

could not do such a deed, and that to a poor old man who has never injured you.”

“Be not too sure of that,” replied his opponent; “I have dared do things that you may hear of before we part. They may be a warrant I could do others, something fearful. And as for injuring *me*, there lives not the wretch on this accursed earth who has injured me as you have done; and yet I have been the butt against which every worldly villain has sent a shaft. But fear not—my purpose is not against thy worthless life!—I have no desire to cut short by violence the nearly wasted thread of thy remaining days. It is only resistance that would make me use the power I possess. Sit there, old man—aye, on yonder stone; there lies the dark gulph—thou hast no mind to leap it; for age, dotard age, clings as fondly to this world of folly as the greenest youth. There lies the gulph behind you, and here I stand before you, George Standwich, armed, and in full remembrance of the past.”

“Great God! George Standwich!” exclaimed Sir Hugh, and he turned pale as death while he spoke. “Is it possible? Do I behold George Standwich, who escaped—”

“A charge of murder,” said the outlaw,

supplying the close of Sir Hugh's sentence, which from terror he suppressed as it was about to drop from his lips. "Yes, and more than that. In me you behold a man so miserable, that nothing but the privilege he has gained, as the right of misery, to curse, to hate, and to requite mankind, could make him endure to live, to inhale the common air that is rendered hateful, since it is poisoned by the breath of man. I am most wretched."

"These words are dreadful," said Sir Hugh, who felt some relief to his personal fears, from the tone of deep melancholy in which Standwich spoke, since he knew well that men, when about to commit an act of violence, are seldom capable of any feeling that approaches to the softness of sorrow—"dreadful indeed. I am not your judge, George Standwich; my life is at this moment solely in your power. My purpose cannot be to irritate your feelings. Whatever counsel I give, therefore, must be honest; and thus much I am bound, in Christian charity, to give you. If a sense of—(guilt, Sir Hugh was about to say, but his fears made him soften the expression, so that he only added)—of past errors weighs upon your mind, there is yet a long-suffering God who delights in mercy."

“Aye, but who shall dare hope to find it?” said Standwich wildly, “not man, miserable man. All things, save man, are obedient to God’s laws. The winds and seas obey him; the great globe, the heavens, and all the stars in their course, follow but one order, the law of Him who made them. At His command, these vast and rugged rocks stand fast on their everlasting base, receiving the sullen tempest that visits their loftiest crest in living fire, in thunder, and all the contest of the elements, with the same submission as they would the lightest breath of spring. It is not thus that I obey God’s laws, since one law I never can obey.”

“You can think justly,” said old Sir Hugh, who wondered to what this extraordinary discourse would lead, “and, in doing so, must be conscious that great is that sin to which we yield obedience against conviction.”

“You say well, old man,” replied Standwich, and fixing his eye upon Fitz with a peculiar expression of bitter feeling, he added, “it is to *you* I owe all my guilt, all my misery; and, though my soul should be the forfeit, *you* I can *never* forgive. Now is God’s law broken?”

“Aye, and fearfully,” said Sir Hugh, his terror returning in full force at this moment;

“yet I beseech you, for your own sake, if not for mine, do not add sin to sin. Let me pass hence, for such words are dangerous; passion leads to madness, and that may tempt you. Let me pass, and fear nothing from our strange interview this morning.”

“You shall not pass,” cried Standwich; “I am not mad. I came hither prepared to meet you—prepared to read the catalogue of those injuries you have heaped upon my head—to repeat to you the crimes that owe their birth to you, and to warn you of a consequence that may be fatal to you and yours, whilst I point out the only means to shun it.”

“The past is past,” said Sir Hugh, greatly alarmed. “Why renew old grievances? I meant you no ill when I did what I conceived to be my duty to my friend, and to the common cause of justice—of humanity.”

Standwich laid his hand on his pistol, as Sir Hugh once more attempted to pass him. The knight suddenly stopt, and, as if calling up a degree of spirit that had before apparently deserted him, he said, “I will hear you, George Standwich; but I will not thus be governed by fear. I am an old man; shed my blood at your own peril. God is with us both, though the

eye of man is far off. I am a sinner ; but fitter, perhaps, to render up my account, on a sudden summons, than you are."

Standwich, struck by the only mark of real courage Sir Hugh had displayed during the meeting, as well as with the truth of the observation, dropt his pistol, placed his hand on the shoulder of the old man, and looking him full in the face, with an aspect in which frenzy seemed to contend with grief, said, " But for thee, I might have been, as thou art, happy, and unstained by the guilt of human blood. Have you not injured me ? Who was it first discovered to Glanville my honourable affection for his daughter ? Who interfered to induce him to separate us ? *You*—you did this. Who advised her fatal marriage with Sir John Page, a wretch, sordid and miserable ? You did this ; and when those fiends that lie in wait to tempt men to their own perdition—those accursed spirits that stir up the soul to madness, lawless love, passion, jealousy, revenge,—prompted me to seduce the wife of Page, and to bear her from him, who but you found out our retreat, and, after twelve months of guilt, tore her from my arms, to restore her, stained as she was, to those of a husband ?—You, you did this, and

more than this. Who accused her? By whose means was she brought to a public tribunal, and there convicted of murder? You were that accursed wretch."

"So help me God," said Fitz, "before whose tribunal I must one day stand, as well as that unhappy woman, I did nought but what seemed to me my duty. The evidence I gave in court was true. I deposed to nothing but what I saw and heard. The signal given by you, when you threw the sand against her window, was distinctly heard by me, as unseen I lurked near you. The words also that you exclaimed, '*For God's sake hold your hand,*' and the answer made by your paramour from the window above, '*it is too late, the deed is done.*' These words I heard, and to these I deposed in open court; they were true. And if by them the criminal met her doom, it was by the judgment of heaven, of her country's laws, and from no private enmity of mine. Did she not say the deed was done?"

"She did, she did," cried Standwich, whilst a convulsive shuddering seemed to pass over his frame. "The crime was great, but oh, the penalty of it was terrible. She perished at the stake for the murder of her husband; and thou,"

he added, again relapsing in fury, “thou didst bring her to it. It was thy act that lighted the fatal brand, else she might have lived. It was thy accursed spirit, active for evil; thy busy, meddling, legal skill, that collected facts, brought forward evidence, and did this to make one wretched woman yield up her soul in the midst of the horrors of the burning pile, to fill mine with endless tortures—and yet they tell me that I was the cause—the tempter—the fatal source of all. I fled to save my name the stain of perishing as a common felon. For fame is dear, even to the damned; else why do so many perish with a denial of the very guilt for which they suffer? What must be life to me? what death? what an hereafter?”

Whilst Standwich poured forth thus wildly the language of remorse and misery, Sir Hugh, who stood before him, and in whose bosom there was a large share of the milk of human kindness, felt even for this guilty outlaw some touch of compassion. This feeling encouraged the good-natured knight once more in the attempt to sooth the mind of Standwich by leading him to better thoughts; and he said mildly, “Holy writ teaches us, unhappy man, that the first steps by which the guilty return to God are,

like those of the Prodigal, by the paths of humility, self-abasement, and penitence. That path lies open before you ; and your own feelings seem to lead you to it. Follow the good suggestion—it is from God. Say with the penitent, ‘ Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son ;’ do this, and may God have mercy on your soul.”

“ That is thy creed,” said Standwich ; “ but know that mine thinks it not enough—mine demands labours such as would startle the most zealous of thy faith, ere I can hope to obtain the merciful absolution of our Church. I have visited Rome itself in the hope to find pardon ; I have confessed all the horrid tale ;—even the Pope himself has heard it. And on one condition, on the doing of *one* only *act*, can I hope to receive his forgiveness. But it is not of this I would speak,” continued Standwich, “ my misery can never end. And one of its fatal fruits will survive to curse me, even when I am in the tomb.”

“ I hope not,” said Sir Hugh ; “ and though you may hold my opinions heretical, yet this much I can truly say, in the brotherhood of common charity, that I trust thy miseries will

end with thy days; that the pains you have suffered here on earth, may spare you those of an hereafter. Yet this hope can never reach you unless you renounce a guilty life. You have cause to thank God for one mercy, that you will leave no creature belonging to you to survive your shame."

"You have touched a chord," said Standwich, "with a rude hand, that awakens a dreadful note in my bosom; one creature *still* survives, who owes to me the sorrow of an existence that must be branded with infamy. The child of our sin, the miserable offspring of adultery and murder, is still in being."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Fitz, "can such a wretched creature breathe, to be marked by the finger of scorn, as the child of the guilty Lady Page and of George Standwich?"

"She lives," cried Standwich, "the child lives. And how will thy proud heart swell with indignation when I tell thee, Sir Hugh, that she is like to bear thy name, to become the cankered branch from which the honours, or say the shame, of thy house must descend to posterity! Margaret, the ward of Glanville, the betrothed of thy son, thy only son, is my daughter."

This last communication so effectually over-

powered old Sir Hugh, that he could only reply to it by raising his eyes to heaven, and faintly exclaiming as he did so, "is it possible? can this be the fatal secret of her birth!"

"It is the fatal truth," said Standwich. "Aye, shudder; so will all mankind when they look on Margaret, and know her as the child of a murderess—as the child of horror—to sum up all that is dreadful in one word, as the child of Standwich. Who would wed Margaret, think you, thus disgraced, thus branded from her very birth?"

"Not my son," said Sir Hugh. "I have but one son, the prop of my age, and the hope of my name. In him, flourishing like the green bay tree, I hoped to see his branches thicken around me in a happy posterity, whilst I might rest under them; and when, like the withered autumn leaf, I dropt away, leave others to succeed me green and vigorous. But rather than see the blood of my house mingled with such pollution as thine, rather than that, I would consent to follow John Fitz, all young and promising as he is, to the tomb; and then lay me down a desolate old man, to wait in sorrow till my glass had eked out the few remaining sands of life."

“ Yet,” said Standwich, “ with whatever dislike you may view this proposed union of our children (you start at the very thought of such a union), your abhorrence to it cannot equal mine. Your cause to detest such a tie cannot be so strong; for Margaret is in herself innocent. But think you I could behold my daughter wed with the son of him who was the first cause of all my sin and misery—the man who brought her mother to the stake; when such a union would make her the bride of one who is a heretic, already numbered with the damned?—No: I love Margaret with all a father’s fondness. She neither knows guilt, nor that she is the offspring of guilt. She is like the flower that flourishes on these rude rocks, but is innocent and beautiful in itself. Yet, such as she is, I would rather, did she now stand here, hurl her headlong from this rock, and give her delicate limbs as a prey to the wildest bird that ever flapped its wings at the scent of blood, than see her wedded to a living thing that claimed alliance with thee.”

“ Peace, peace,” said Fitz; “ it is awful to hear a father speak thus. Poor damsel! I, who renounce for ever the very thought of her being my son’s wife, yet even I pity her; she seems

of a spirit so gentle, so unfit to contend with the cold scorn of an unfeeling world. And, I fear, she loves my son. I know how dearly he loves her. I had given my consent, and now I must make him wretched."

"It is a just requital," said Standwich, "a requital of your interference, when you first poisoned the mind of Glanville against me; when I loved, and honourably, his daughter, ere she became the wife of another."

"In that matter," replied Sir Hugh, "I thought I did but a friendly part; for I must tell you, George Standwich, you bore an evil reputation, as a young man of violent passions, of doubtful principles and conduct. But my poor John, to make him miserable, to disappoint his affections! I knew something fatal would happen from the hour of his birth. I learnt that by the stars as I cast his horoscope."

"But I will tell you," said Standwich, "what no star could ever reveal;—it is this, (and mark me well, for life or death depend upon it), you must devise the means to break this engagement between your son and Margaret. Remember, it must be done without the secret of Margaret's birth being betrayed by you, either to that son, or to any living creature.

Let me but once suspect you have revealed to John Fitz the truth, and vainly shall you attempt to shelter him from my vengeance. I have means, I have intelligence, I have engines constantly at work, of which you little dream. Betray to Fitz the fatal secret, and you shall speedily see your only son a corpse at your feet, and your name for ever extinguished. Promise silence on this theme, and then I leave you, perhaps for ever."

"I do, I will promise it," replied Sir Hugh in great alarm; for these threats from a man so desperate as Standwich had awakened all a father's fears in his heart. "Tell me but this, before we part, does Glanville suspect that Margaret is the child of his deceased and guilty daughter?"

"No," said Standwich; "he who bore the name of Margaret's father was my near kinsman, my dearest friend. To save an ancient house from total ruin and disgrace, to guard the helpless child from public scorn, he consented to take her with him to France, and there to bring her up as his own daughter. He died, and left Margaret to the care of Glanville, but without revealing to him, or to her, the fatal secret."

“It is enough,” said Sir Hugh; “had it pleased heaven to have taken that unhappy infant to its bosom at the moment of its birth, it would have been a mercy.”

“A mercy,” replied Standwich, “that was not vouched to me. I looked at the miserable little wretch as it lay sleeping in my arms, after its guilty mother’s death, and a horrid thought crossed my mind—I looked again, and the child, in the soft breathings of sleep, smiled like a cherub; the fiend that stood by, watching to tempt me to another crime, fled before its innocence, and a tear dropped from my eyes—yes, this hard heart was softened; and as I kissed the poor child, an angel seemed to whisper that it might be spared, one day to breathe to heaven a prayer from its innocent lips for mercy on my head—these recollections unman me.”

Fitz looked up, and observed that the eyes of Standwich were suffused with tears.

“Farewell, old man,” he continued, “Remember the fearful conference of this morning. Remember to obey my injunctions—break this fatal bond between our children—dare not to reveal my secret, and you have nothing to fear—farewell.”

Without farther parley, Standwich hurried

from the rock, and retreated through the wood with precipitate steps, leaving Sir Hugh Fitz in a state of mind truly pitiable. For some minutes he stood motionless on the very spot where he had parted from the outlaw ; and then, sighing heavily, he walked forward, untied his horse, mounted, and rode slowly back to Morwel house, pondering in his mind, as he went along, on the best method to be pursued to break this ill-starred engagement of his son with the innocent but unfortunate Margaret.

CHAPTER VI.

Pride hath no other glass
To shew itself, but Pride.

SHAKSPEARE.

SIR HUGH FITZ, on his return to Morwel house, found the hunters not yet arrived; a circumstance that afforded him a short interval to compose his thoughts and arrange his ideas, before he should encounter that beloved son, whom he felt himself compelled to render unhappy, perhaps, for the remainder of his days. And it was some relief to the worthy man, when John Fitz did arrive, that he came not alone, but surrounded by the jovial crew of successful sportsmen, all highly elated with the cheering exercise they had pursued. The festal board was spread; and the social meal, enlivened by harmless mirth and many a tankard of foaming ale, became one of universal joy.

With what painful sensations did Sir Hugh that day observe the light-hearted spirits of his son, knowing, as he did, that the young man

was yet wholly unconscious of the change awaiting his prospects. A father had been propitious to his affection for Margaret ; he had even promised to use his influence with his mother, to conquer her objections to this union of her son with a beautiful and amiable woman, whose only demerit was a certain mystery that hung over her birth. That mystery was now solved, and all must change. When Sir Hugh thought upon these things, though lawyers are more apt to consider the events of human life in a matter-of-fact manner, than with any degree of poetic feeling, yet he could not help comparing the present happy state of his son, and the sorrow his disappointed affections would occasion him hereafter, to the sea-boy who passes with delight over those waters, as they lie shining and bright around him, unconscious that the same element is destined one day, perhaps, to engulf him and his hopes for ever.

By the injunctions of Standwich, accompanied even with a dreadful threat, which there was little doubt a character so resolute would not scruple to execute, Sir Hugh was bound to conceal the real cause that existed for his forbidding the proposed union. His situation, therefore, was one of extreme difficulty ; for, do

what he would, he felt he must appear to John Fitz as playing a capricious and cruel part : since, having already implied that his consent would be given, now to retract, without a sufficient cause being assigned, must seem as an unpardonable act of tyranny on the part of a father.

On one point, however, he speedily determined, and that was to remove his son, as soon as possible, from the fascinating presence of Margaret, and the dangerous threats of Standwich. To do this he resolved to send John Fitz abroad. The time was favourable for his undertaking, as many sons of the English nobility and gentry had volunteered their services in the Low Countries, under General Norris, who there carried on the war in support of the Protestants, in the cause of civil as well as religious liberty.

John Fitz, who had considerable spirit, and longed to distinguish himself in arms, had often solicited his father to allow him to serve, as other young men of his age did, in some of the public transactions of the time. But the love of an only son, and fears for his safety, had hitherto prevented a fond father giving his consent. And of late, so much had love enthralled

the soul of the son, that he had ceased to importune his parents on the subject ; well knowing that such a step must remove him, though but for a time, from the side of his beloved Margaret. It was now that Sir Hugh saw there was no other means effectually to break off this unhappy connexion ; and he felt assured that should he obtain an appointment for John Fitz, his son's regard for his own character, as a man of honour, would oblige him to accept it. This appointment therefore he resolved to obtain, and to keep his purpose secret till it was executed.

To part from his only son, to place him amidst the perils of war on a foreign land, was indeed a sacrifice. But Sir Hugh saw no other way to avoid what he deemed a greater evil ; and he resolved, cost what it would, the sacrifice should be made. In the mean time, whenever his son ventured to lead the discourse to that subject which was ever nearest his heart, Sir Hugh either evaded it, or received it so coldly, that John Fitz dared not pursue the theme, lest he should irritate the mind of his father on a point where he was most anxious to conciliate his feelings. With Lady Fitz the worthy knight had a less difficult part to play, as he

resolved to act on her will through the medium of her pride.

One day, therefore, Sir Hugh craved a serious consultation with his wife. In this he told her, as a communication of great confidence, that he had cause to believe their son John had formed an affection much below his birth and expectations; for he had set his heart on Margaret, the mysterious ward of Glanville. In order therefore to crush this affection in the bud, he, Sir Hugh, had resolved to send his son abroad for a time, to see some service, like most young men of family, in a foreign land; feeling assured that when Lady Fitz knew such a measure was the only likely means to save John from marrying with a woman of low birth, she would gladly consent to it.

Lady Fitz immediately fell into the snare that was laid for her by a husband, who knew well, from his legal practice, how to act on the passions and foibles of mankind. She declared her willingness to consent to any measure, rather than see such a death-blow aimed at the honour of her family. It was farther agreed, in order to prevent any plotting on the part of the lover, that he should not know how he was to be disposed of till all things were in readiness for his

departure. Lady Fitz went even a step beyond her husband in precaution ; for recollecting that love will sometimes outlive absence, and that possibly, after a campaign or so, John Fitz might return still faithful to Margaret, the provident lady thought nothing so effectual to putting an old love out of her son's head as that of giving him a new one, and did not scruple to name her project to her husband.

Sir Hugh, though he was too prudent directly to contradict her, for the present waived the subject ; justly thinking that he was executing tyranny enough to tear Margaret from his son's affection, after having implied his consent, without insisting upon a tyranny yet more cruel, that of uniting him to one woman, whilst he was devoted to another. The good knight hoped that all these difficulties might be brought round by time, the great physician of evils, who sometimes cures, as well as gives, the heart-ache. But still knowing that mere words on the part of his wife could do no harm, he suffered Lady Fitz to go on building her castles in the air with perfect complacency.

“ Certainly, Sir Hugh,” was her frequent remark, “ you are quite right in removing John for the present from this unfortunate connexion,

I could never consent to my son marrying with a woman born without arms."

"Certainly not, my dear Lady Fitz," replied her husband.

"Or, perhaps, if she had any," rejoined his genealogical partner, "they might but quarter our honourable coat with the bar of bastardy: a disgrace that never happened to our honourable family but once; when King Henry VIII. is said to have added a member to it by a love passage with my grandmother, the beautiful Lady Alicia. But you know, Sir Hugh, an honourable family may tolerate a bar that is given to it by a crowned head, but certainly by no less a person."

"I don't know any such thing, my dear Lady Fitz," said Sir Hugh, "nor do I know that a king's bastard is one iota the more creditable an appendage to an honourable family than that of any other man; seeing that, in either case, the circumstance is not creditable to our grandmothers, who ought to be chary of their reputation, even if they have no regard to God's laws, for the sake of posterity. For you know, Lady Fitz, that, by the law of the land, such children have no inheritance; and an heir male, in the legal sense, is to carry on the entail,

especially when there is land and title depending. An heir male is the pride of every ancient house like ours."

"That's the very cause," said Lady Fitz, "why I could wish our John to marry; since I look upon sons, not so much for their own sakes, as for that of the name of the family to which they belong, for that descends, through them, to the farthest generations. In my estimation, every elder born is as much family property as the mansion-house, or freehold he is to inherit, and should be equally disposed of, in a manner most advantageous for the estate. Now if John Fitz was, as I proposed to you, to marry Lady Ellen Howard, he would do well; nothing could be more honourable, or hold out a greater prospect of happiness. She has had, to my knowledge, three cousins germane members of the Privy Council. An uncle of hers lost his head in the great rebellion in the north, a distinction that only happens amongst great people; and her own father held his principal estate by doing grand serjeantry to the king, buckling on his spurs whenever his majesty took the field for the first time after his coronation. Lady Howard has land, too, that joins ours; so that one may say the fields themselves, in token of their owners, are already united. All these

are things that offer great advantages in the married state for our John."

"But perhaps our John, Lady Fitz," said Sir Hugh, "may think there are a few others that ought to be taken into the account; such as person, disposition, and the qualities of the damsel to whom you would unite him."

"Assuredly," replied Lady Fitz, "Lady Howard is a proper gentlewoman; and then for qualities, she has an ample share of the tongues. I question if Mistress Roper, the daughter of Sir Thomas More, could have construed better in Latin and Greek. What would a husband desire more? And she has a curious hand at the lute and the manichord, and can distil sweet waters with any lady in the county."

"And to add to these good gifts," said Sir Hugh, who was willing to humour his wife in her plan, "I have heard she has many virtues; amongst which, certainly, is that of a sharp wit, together with a good name; and this, after all, wife, is the most valuable thing Lady Howard could give to the arms of a husband."

"With a lion rampant, and two wyverns," said Lady Fitz, returning to the old and favourite theme of her pride, "what indeed could a husband desire more? With such an honourable tree of alliances that branch out and

connect themselves with every honourable line in the kingdom ; with such a line of noble ancestors and grandmothers, our son will, I may say, marry them all, if he weds with Lady Howard."

" Why surely, woman," cried Sir Hugh, " you would have him be content with one wife. You would not have him marry the dead as well as the living? No no, leave those grand ancestors and great-grandmothers to rest in peace, like their effigies carved in stone, that lie with upraised hands as in prayer in our churches ; as if, good souls, they had all been saints in this world, though many of them, I doubt, who make up that honourable line, were as great sinners as their living representatives. But I will write to my friend, General Norris, and despatch a trusty messenger with the letter, and see what can be done to get an appointment for our son John, to remove him from those dangerous enemies to youth—love, poetry, and idleness."

And so saying, Sir Hugh quitted his helpmate, just as she had reached down, from the second shelf of her own particular cabinet, the family tree, to see how the new alliance would branch in, and branch out, with the noble dead and live stock which that sacred roll of family consequence so amply contained.

CHAPTER VII.

“ — When this ring
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence.”

SHAKSPEARE.

DURING the interval between Sir Hugh's painful change of purpose, and his communication of it to his son, the time was passed by the young people with less enjoyment than heretofore. The coldness of Sir Hugh's manner, and his having informed Glanville that the disapprobation of Lady Fitz, and other family circumstances, would, he feared, oblige him to give over all thoughts of the union, had been communicated to Margaret by her guardian with as much tenderness as the case would admit. This information came upon her with a pang more bitter, since, of late, both herself and John Fitz had encouraged the hope that his father would ultimately consent to their happiness.

The advice of Glanville, that Margaret should by no means receive the addresses of the young Fitz in direct opposition to the will of his fa-

ther, and old Sir Hugh having of late so beset his son, that he could scarcely escape his observation for a moment, had also kept the young people apart from each other ; so that, in addition to other anxieties, Margaret had been tormented with those of suspense, uncertainty, and almost suspicion of the constancy of him, who had taken so much pains to gain an interest in her affections. Things were in this position, when Margaret one evening rambled out to that beautiful spot, near the woods of Kilworthy, called the Pixies' pool.

The sun was fast sinking into the western horizon amid sullen clouds, and as he threw his gloomy lustre around, every green valley and every distant hill changed to a deep purple, whilst the tops of the mountainous heights of Dartmoor seemed to glitter for a moment like the brightest gold, and then to melt away before the evening hour, as fairy visions of fancy fly before the cold realities of human life. As Margaret sat watching the changing scene, and saw the majestic orb of day gradually sink below the clouds, she sighed heavily, and could not help drawing the comparison in her own mind between the moral and the physical world ; thinking that her own hopes, like the dying day,

would soon sink before the dark clouds of fate by which her path of life seemed surrounded.

She took her seat on a portion of the rocks near the pool that now lay clear and placid, reflecting, as in a black mirror, every object in the sombre hues of the evening hour. She gazed upon its surface, and fell into a train of deep meditation on her own precarious prospects. As thus she sat with her head reclined upon her arm, dejected, yet calm and lovely in her demeanour, she might have been compared to the melancholy nymph of the Walla (so beautifully described by Browne in his *Pastorals*), before she was transformed into the fountain, whose liquid current is supposed by the poet to receive its waters from her tears. Margaret, however, was not so wholly absorbed in these reflections, but that she now and then raised her head, to look with an anxious eye to a little path that led through the wood from the town of Tavistock, and her expectations were at length relieved by observing two persons advancing, one of whom stopt at a particular spot, which commanded an opening in the wood that looked towards Kilworthy; the other came directly forward, with hasty and impatient steps. Margaret pressed her hands together in great agi-

tation, as John Fitz took his seat by her side ; for Fitz it was who now gazed upon her with silent affection, as if unable to speak what hung upon his lips. At length, making an effort to recover his self-possession, he said, “ This is kind, Margaret, thus to comply with my request. How fondly, how anxiously have I looked for these moments, though they possibly may be the last I shall ever pass by your side.”

The pleasure which Margaret felt from the fluttering hope that stole into her bosom at the presence of her beloved Fitz, was speedily put to flight by his last words, and, unable to conceal her disappointment, she said, “ Was it to tell me this, that you so earnestly importuned me in your letter to meet you here at this hour ? I thought it was to communicate better tidings. But perhaps I ought not to have come.”

“ It is the last act of kindness you may ever show me, Margaret ; do not, therefore, embitter it by regrets. To-morrow no obstacle will stand between you and duty, should you deem it such to forget me. My father has banished me, not only from your presence, but from my native land ; and I have a heavy foreboding, that tells me this separation may be for ever.”

Margaret, deeply affected by his words, wept

aloud. She was too simple-hearted to disguise her feelings—she had no consciousness that they were wrong, and she made no effort to hide the bitter pang his words conveyed to her bosom. “And must you go?” she said tenderly; “and must I be friendless as well as fatherless? When God had joined our hearts, why should man part them?”

“No man can sunder mine from you, dearest love,” replied Fitz, “unless he sunders the tie that binds me to life; and even then my spirit would hover near you, if the spirits of the dead are suffered to linger near the living. My father has dealt severely, nay treacherously, by me. He has placed me in such a situation that I cannot remain here without the loss of honour, else no earthly consideration should tear me from your side. He has obtained for me an appointment to join the English forces in the Low Countries. My name is already enrolled amongst those which constitute the most noble in the land; judge, therefore, Margaret, how I could now stay, without becoming a mark for public scorn—without being held as a coward, who dared not draw a sword in a just cause of quarrel.”

“But our engagement,” said Margaret, “was

before this appointment was obtained; and surely to leave me now is cruel, when you have laboured so earnestly to gain from me that avowal which places my happiness within your power."

"But without honour there could be no happiness for you or me," replied Fitz; "I could not bear the world's contumely, and I will never deserve it. Women think differently on these points from men; yet of one thing be assured, that wheresoever my destiny shall lead me, if in the ranks of danger, or on the bed of death, my last thoughts will be with Margaret."

"Oh, do not talk thus," she said, "unless you would break my heart with sorrow. Stay, do not leave us. Your father may relent, and we may yet be happy; but to part thus—" Sobs here interrupted her words, whilst tears fast trickled down her cheeks. John Fitz kissed them off, and taking the hand of Margaret between both his own, he said, "I have hurt you. I have spoken too suddenly, too harshly, my purpose; yet had I felt less, I could have better made it known. My father has of late much changed. He has obtained this appointment without my knowledge or consent; and I own to you, that he has cast out dreadful hints

respecting my proposed union with yourself, charging me even on pain of incurring a father's curse, that I should think of you no more."

"Alas !" said Margaret, "in what have I offended, that he should speak thus harshly ? or why did he ever allow of our affection, if it were only now to blight it ?"

"It is cruel, most cruel !" cried Fitz ; "and what appears to me even yet more extraordinary is, that however severe my father was in words, his *manner* frequently contradicted them ; so that I am assured, whilst he inflicted pain on me, he shared in it himself. Yet nothing I could urge moved him to relent his purpose."

"Then we must part indeed !" said Margaret ; "I will never be the cause that you should incur a father's curse by disobedience. I may be unhappy, but I will not be unjust."

"Dearest, gentlest of beings," said Fitz ; "but for my evil fate, how enviable would have been my lot. Blessed with the affections of a creature so good, so kind as Margaret, had our station been amongst those who in this world are doomed to contend with all the evils of poverty, and to toil for the poor pittance of their daily meal, I could have been happy ; but thus to be driven from you—"

“ It is the will of heaven,” replied Margaret, “ and let us bow down before it. Go, John Fitz, fulfil the duty of a son, and that Providence, whose eye is ever open to watch the steps of the obedient, will bless you. It is he who has commanded children to honour their parents, and to follow their counsels even when they seem untoward. For myself I have no parents, no sympathising friend who will share my sorrows. I must learn to bear my hard fate alone ; whilst you have a world before you, that will look on, and applaud your acts. Glory will be your path, fame your reward. Forget then the vision of our early affection, that crossed your path ; and may you be happy. I will pray to God to preserve your life ; even your father would not forbid me that prayer.”

“ I part from you,” said Fitz, “ but I cannot, I will not consent to lose you for ever. It is thinking of my absence, the peril of the times, the dangerous employment in which I must engage, that makes me sometimes fear this separation may be for ever. But whilst I have life, I will indulge hope. I will never yield up my right to Margaret’s heart and hand. Hear me, for I have considered what may happen in every view ; you may be impor-

tuned to renounce me; you may hear reports invented to poison your mind, to make you think me unfaithful; but never trust them. Margaret, receive this ring," and as he spoke he took one from his own, and drew it upon her finger; "receive it as a parting pledge of my affection, and hear the vow that accompanies the gift: let what will happen hereafter, should my father exert the utmost rigour in the endeavour to part us, should you be placed in any circumstances of sorrow or distress that this changeful world may bring upon you, and if you need a friend in your affliction, a friend to serve you with life itself, send but that ring to John Fitz, and though death stood between to bid him back, he *swears* to obey the summons—in the name of heaven he swears to fly to your aid. And do you, Margaret, solemnly promise never to part with that token of pure affection, whether I am living or dead. Let that be the remembrance of one who loved you more than life itself."

"I promise it," said Margaret, "in the sight of that God, in whose presence we both stand, I solemnly promise, that, however I may be circumstanced hereafter, unless it be to claim the aid you have so generously offered to me, this

ring shall never be drawn from my finger till death has stiffened my hand. Are you satisfied?"

"Yes," replied Fitz, "on that point I am satisfied; but, oh Margaret, think what will be my feelings in this absence from you. Think how long, how dearly I have loved you; that, for your sake, I had resigned all those hopes of rising to honour, that my father has now thrust upon me. Think, that for your love I am willing to meet his displeasure, nay even to let his curse fall upon my head, rather than lose you."

"Peace!" cried Margaret, "do not say so. Disobedience to a parent is a heavy sin, that God will requite with his fiercest anger. I will not be yours without your father's blessing be upon our union. Yet I cannot say I will forget, since my affections are no longer my own. Why, therefore, express so unkind a suspicion?—Rather take back your token, than give it with so unkind a thought."

"You mistake me, Margaret, sadly mistake me," said Fitz; "if I am suspicious, it is not of your own good faith. I fear time, the power of circumstances, the influence of others. Picture to your own mind, as I have done a thousand times to my fancy, what would be my

feelings, if, after an absence long and painful, after I had experienced all those changes of fortune that attend us to the field, and, should I escape death, to return to the only hope of my life, then think what must be my feelings should I find it withered; if, from any circumstance, Margaret should be changed, or lost to me for ever."

"You anticipate evil," said Margaret; "we have ills enough to make us sick at heart, without calling up those which may never happen, to make us wretched. Entertain better thoughts, and let the first of them be to place some confidence in Margaret."

"I do, I will," said Fitz. "Forgive my distrusts; but who, Margaret, can hold a treasure in which his life is bound up, without feeling some uneasy thoughts lest he should lose it."

Whilst John Fitz was yet speaking, his companion, whom we have before noticed he had left at a particular spot in the wood, came running up, and hastily exclaimed, "Break off your conference; some persons have crossed the wood in another direction, and are gone up towards the house. Amongst them I saw Glanville and Lady Howard; you had better part, for if Mistress Margaret is inquired for,

and found wanting, it may cause suspicions which, at such a moment, you might not wish to incur."

"Your are right, Slanning," said Fitz, "and though you have broken in upon us before I summoned you, yet I am glad you are here, as it is but just Margaret should know how much I owe to my friend." And turning to her he continued, "Sir Nicholas Slanning is in full possession of my confidence; he knows all my hopes, and it is by his means that I am to gain intelligence from you during this painful absence. Yes, Margaret, this generous friend has promised me to watch over you with the tenderness of a brother's affection. Receive him as a brother; remember how much I owe to his kindness, since it is he who has shared all my sorrow, it is Slanning who has alleviated it, and it is to his faithful care that I must now commit the dearest thing I hold on earth. Slanning, in Margaret view the better, the dearer part of myself. Look upon her with the eye of protection, guard her from evil, soothe her afflicted mind, and sometimes, when I am far away, talk to her of your friend, who has no hopes in life but those which rest on the fidelity of her he loves, and the care of his generous friend. Do

this, and I am bound to you in a debt of gratitude that can end but with life."

"I fear," said Slanning, whose simple and honest-hearted feelings seemed to glow in every feature as he spoke, "I fear that I am but ill qualified to do the office you would entrust to me. I am, madam, a young man who has been more used to deal with the world as it goes, than with ladies nurtured like yourself, and I mistrust my own power, when one so gentle as you are, is committed to my care. But if a heart that can serve my friend, John Fitz, who has been my companion from the cradle, and a wish to oblige you, with a stout arm for your defence, to say nothing of a head that I hope is not of the worst, if these can, singly, or conjointly, render you service, you may command them as the properties of Nicholas Slanning, as entirely as if he were your brother born and bred."

"Thank you, Sir Nicholas," said Margaret; "you speak like a gentleman of honour, and I accept your offer with gratitude; though, I trust, beyond the favour of sometimes hearing, by your means, tidings that concern your friend, I shall have no occasion to task your good-will with any service."

“ You shall command it with pleasure, madam,” replied Slanning; “ for on my soul,” he added with warmth, “ I should hold that fellow but a craven, if he could see such a lady as you are distressed, and such a friend as John Fitz in an evil case, and not go through fire and water to serve you both. There’s my hand, John; and though I am not apt to make fine speeches, like a courtier, yet I can promise fairly and honestly to be true to the charge you have this day laid upon me. And now what more can I do for you ?”

“ I would ask you,” said Fitz, “ to bear me company as far as London, whither I must go before I pass on ship-board, and then you shall bear back my last farewell to all that I value on earth. Adieu, Margaret, receive the services of my friend without scruple. You may need them. Farewell ! may heaven be with you ; and remember that I leave my happiness in your keeping.” Again and again did Fitz linger to say a last word to Margaret ; still something was forgot, something left unsaid, till Sir Nicholas Slanning reminded him that it was absolutely necessary to be gone. At length he tore himself away ; but often turned his head as he went, to catch the last sight of Marga-

ret, as she ascended the hill on her return to Kilworthy house. The evening, that had nearly now closed in, rendered every object obscure ; still, however, it afforded sufficient light for him to distinguish her white veil, as it seemed to float like a snowflake in the landscape ; and when, by a sudden turn in the wood, it was lost to his sight, Fitz deeply sighed, as if that and his hopes had disappeared together.

CHAPTER VIII.

Now let imagination form a time.

SHAKSPEARE.

IN the old drama, whenever it became necessary for the development of the plot that some imaginary space of time should elapse between the closing of one act and the opening of another, the chorus stepped forward before the curtain, and filled up the blank, by stating such particulars as were supposed to pass during the interval, and were too many to be exhibited on the stage.

Now, though we are not altogether about to enact the part of chorus, as in the old plays, we nevertheless must so far imitate these venerable models, as to request our readers to consider the close of the last chapter like the close of an act, and to allow us to take advantage of it by dropping the curtain over a certain space of time. Let them *imagine*, therefore, that nearly two years have elapsed since the occurrence of those events we have lately

recorded ; at the expiration of which term we again take up the thread of our narrative.

Two years is but a short space of time in human life, yet often fraught with changes as wonderful as they are unforeseen. Who that has lived in the world, and has by his own experience witnessed its busy events, which, like the ebbing and flowing of the tide, never stand still, who that has seen this, will feel any amazement to hear that in so short a time things the most unlooked-for have taken place ? that, for instance, the healthy have become sick, that the dying have escaped death, that the old are still alive, or that the young are dead ; whilst the miserable are often raised up from misery by ways so unexpected, that they can alone be attributed to the intervention of Providence ; all their own exertions, and theirs who helped them, having failed. How often is it seen, in this short interval, that the fairest schemes which men have toiled to bring to perfection are blighted and overthrown, whilst the poor are grown rich, and the rich have learnt how vain it is to trust in the multitude of their riches. But changes more wonderful even than these take place, in the brief course of this world's events. Our feelings, nay our

very motives of action, change ; so much are we *all* the creatures of circumstance. A man may say, in the pride of his heart, ‘ *this I will never do,*’ and ‘ *that I will never be ;*’ but the will of God overrules all ; and unless he can stay the course of Providence, it is difficult for man to say what he *will* do, or what he will *not* be, from circumstances in which he may be placed. It is better therefore to say nothing but this, that he will endeavour at all times, and in all situations, to do the will of God ; for that alone is permanent on this side the grave, and is the only thing on which man may calculate with any degree of certainty ; knowing that whatever He wills, is founded on truth and mercy.

We have made these reflections the prelude to our present chapter, because it now becomes our task to record some of those great and unforeseen changes that are apt to startle the novice in the events of human life ; but to the old, to those who have felt the heart-ache, that disease of experience, nothing we have now to relate will appear a subject of wonder. As we parted from John Fitz at the end of our last chapter, so we will begin this with returning to him. The reader cannot but remember that by the will of

his father he had joined the English forces, then in arms against the Prince of Parma, in the Low Countries. There he speedily distinguished himself amongst the bravest of the time ; but his father received the melancholy intelligence that his son was slain in joining an enterprize of great hazard and danger, not many months after he had commenced his melancholy career.

We should vainly attempt to paint the grief of poor old Sir Hugh, or of Margaret, on hearing of this event. Indeed, there was not a heart free from sorrow, when the fatal news came to Tavistock, for John Fitz had been universally beloved ; and his friend Slanning declared, and with truth, that he would rather have lost his own life, than have lived to hear this intelligence. But of all persons afflicted by the event, Margaret, from the peculiar circumstances attending her situation, was most truly an object of pity. Standwich, who, busied in his mad schemes, had, during this period, frequently passed and repassed the seas, still appeared at intervals, and managed to gain a few stolen interviews with his daughter. And though he was only known to her in the character of her spiritual guide, and as the man who, after her father's decease, was appointed

by him to influence her conduct; yet he continued to act upon her mind through the medium of her religious feelings, with fearful ascendancy. Her protector, Glanville, declined in health and spirits, and Margaret was looked upon by his family, and indeed by Lady Howard also, with a degree of jealousy and ill-will, that rendered her situation at times almost insupportable. Often did she wish that it had been the will of heaven she should have shared the grave of Fitz; and often, too, did she ponder on the means most likely to render her situation more tranquil, more composed, during the term of life that might yet remain to her in this world. But she was friendless, and, as she thought, fatherless, without so much as one counsellor, to whom she might unburthen the load of care with which she was oppressed.

To Glanville she could not complain, since his own wife, his relative Lady Howard, and even his own son, looked upon her as an intruder—an object of jealousy and discontent. Her unhappy situation did not escape the observation of a man so generous as Sir Nicholas Slanning, who endeavoured to soothe it by every kind attention which friendship and humanity could suggest, till, by devoting his thoughts and cares so much

to a distressed and beautiful young woman, he became, before he was even aware of it, sincerely attached to her, and, in fine, offered her the only means within his power to alleviate her hard condition, and render her at once independent, by making her his wife. Margaret declined his proposal, though she gratefully acknowledged it ; and frequently as it was urged upon her, she still declined it, notwithstanding the warmth and sincerity of his affection was too evident to escape her notice. But there was a difference of feeling, of character, so great between Margaret and Slanning, that had she never been devoted to another, he was by no means a likely person to become the object of her choice.

Sir Hugh Fitz, at the time we resume our narrative, was still living at Fitz-ford, still the wealthy and respected knight, the indulgent landlord, the kind friend, and the sincere member of the reformed church. In these points he was unchanged ; but in other things he was so greatly altered, that scarcely would he have been recognized for that good-natured, whimsical old man once known to his acquaintance, who, whilst they laughed at his follies, did full justice to the sterling worth of his character.

Sir Hugh's grey hairs were now turned to

silver, and grew in a few thin locks on either side his head, leaving bare the crown, which, in the words of Chaucer, who so well describes baldness, “shone as any glass;” his countenance had lost all those marks of abstraction by which formerly it was so frequently distinguished. Wrinkles had become furrows; and the light of his eye, already quenched by age, seemed now more dimmed than ever.

His dress, always negligent, had become still more so, and his favourite pursuits no longer seemed to interest him. Books, even those of astrology, lay around covered with dust; and the spiders had spun their web over many a shelf that contained them, as well as having taken possession of his empty crucibles and alchymic pots and pans. He ate sparingly, and like a man unconscious of sharing a social meal. *His* indeed was a repast that, like a few drops of oil poured into an expiring lamp, might afford sufficient nourishment to keep up a feeble and flickering light, but could never supply the means to produce a strong and steady flame. When worn out with watching, tired nature afforded him rest; yet was it not so welcome as the rest of the grave to which he was hastening, since it was molested with dreams almost as

melancholy as were his waking thoughts. In short to him (as is so beautifully expressed by our great dramatic bard), “life was as tedious as a twice-told tale, vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man.”

Two things were also evident in Sir Hugh's change of life : first, that he was become more than ever religious, constantly attending the church on Prayer-days as well as Sundays ; and secondly, that he spent the most of his time in a slip of garden near his house, where a solitary fountain spouted a stream of water amidst beds of flowers and shrubs cultivated with considerable care. A little arbour overgrown with jessamine, stood facing the fountain, and there old Sir Hugh would sit for hours together, till frequently he was called to the house by the attention of his family, who watched over him with all the tenderness that he merited at their hands. His fondness for this little garden was the more remarkable, since never, till now, he had been known to delight in it. But his present manners and pursuits was but one of those changes so frequently seen in the ever-variable picture of this world's crosses and cares—Sir Hugh was in fact the image of a broken-hearted man.

Amongst those who felt a lively sympathy in

the distressing change that had taken place in the poor old Sir Hugh, was Barnabas Ferule the schoolmaster, whose gratitude now shewed itself in an unremitting attention to the worthy knight, whenever Barnabas could steal away from his daily occupations to give an hour to his patron. In the hope to divert his melancholy, he collected, not only all the chit-chat of the neighbourhood, but brought him also the news of the day, as it found its way down to Tavistock, after having gradually proceeded from town to town through the country ; since at this period there were no public journals, to convey intelligence throughout the kingdom within, comparatively speaking, a few hours of its first being circulated in the metropolis ; as it is well known the first newspaper set on foot was at the time all England felt the alarm of the threatened Spanish Armada.

One autumn day found old Sir Hugh seated in the harbour we have just mentioned, with his hands resting on his staff, and watching with that listless gaze, which bespoke a total want of interest in the very thing he contemplated, the dull clouds, as they lowered in dark masses over the tops of the blackening moor. Whilst he

was thus engaged, Barnabas softly stole upon his patron at the usual hour of his visit.

The poor schoolmaster was in all respects much the same as we left him, excepting that he was grown something thinner, his gown something more threadbare, and his face much longer. The latter circumstance was probably the effect of that sympathy he felt for Sir Hugh, which gave to the expression of his whole countenance an air so dismal, that he might have played the part of mute at a funeral, without taking any pains to compose his demeanour so as to suit it to that dolorous character.

Sir Hugh Fitz looked at him as he approached with a "lack-lustre eye," and said in a low and melancholy voice, without changing the attitude in which he sate, "you are welcome, master Barnabas; the clock has struck ten, and I have been expecting you this half hour. How came it you tarried so long after your time?"

"Honoured Sir," replied Barnabas, "it is not more than ten minutes since the clock struck."

"It may be so" said sir Hugh with a sigh; "for the foot of time so lags with me, that his minutes are as hours; and yet, master Barnabas,

with the old he should seem to run a rapid pace, seeing how speedily he passes over the course that lies between the old and the way of all the earth. But why should I sorrow that my lot, like all things else, has had its change, knowing that it is God's will ? Time will pass on his way, and never linger ; joy cannot hold him, and for misery he will not quicken his step."

"Dear Sir Hugh," said Barnabas, "this is a sad mood in which I find you ; can you take no comfort to heart ? will nothing cheer you ? Do try and entertain your mind with your old studies. Dame Gidlay has this morning brought into the world as fine and chopping a boy as ever was born. He came into life just at two of the clock, when there was as beautiful a conjunction of Mars and Venus as ever I looked upon. Do let us set up a scheme to oblige the mother, and tell her what good and evil may be the fortune of her child ; it will be a pleasing diversion to your mind."

"No, no," cried Sir Hugh, as he shook his head mournfully, "nothing, I tell you, will ever more be pleasing to me—I, master Barnabas," and he stooped down and picked up one of those sear and yellow leaves which the wind had

blown into the arbour, "I am but as this withered leaf, that is shrivelled by the autumn air, reft from the stem on which it hung for support—blighted, worthless!" A tear stood in the old man's eyes, and Barnabas, 'all unused to the melting mood,' was nevertheless so much affected at the sight of his patron's grief, as to be obliged to turn aside his head to conceal his own.

"But you promised to bring me the news, master Barnabas," continued the broken-hearted father, as he made an effort to shake off his feelings, and to speak cheerfully—"aye, the news. The courier came last night from Exeter with the London news; did you collect the matter of it for me? How fares her Majesty? I wish her well, though I shall never serve her more—I have served her well; she has had my all, my life's blood, in my poor boy.—Well, well, with my prayers I must serve her now; they are all I have left, and they shall be said for the continuance of her glorious reign."

"Her Majesty is well," replied Barnabas; "and all London hath been much moved by—." Here the schoolmaster stopt as if unwilling to go on with his discourse.

"Speak your news, man," said Sir Hugh:

“never fear to wound me ; I can bear all tidings now, since few things can give me pain, and nothing can give me joy. Speak on, man, *you* cannot turn my thoughts to the subject on which you think my feelings are most alive, more than they are already turned, since they for ever dwell upon it—speak therefore freely.”

“ All London then,” said Barnabas, “is in great sorrow; there is a cry, as I may say, in the very streets; for the body of Sir Philip Sydney is brought home to be honourably interred in Paul’s Church.”

“ And those who loved him most in life, said old Sir Hugh, “will drop a tear on the earth that wraps his clay. He was a gallant gentleman—but where is the grave of my dear boy who fell also in Flanders? his body was never brought home, that I might have the miserable solace to drop a tear upon the green sod which covered his poor remains—dead, changed, resolved again into the very earth from which he sprung, so I might but have been near him once again, to have said, ‘there lies all that is left in this world of John Fitz,’ it would have been some comfort—but it was denied me—he fell with a multitude of the slain, and all filled one common grave.”

“ Sir Hugh,” said Barnabas, with much feeling “ I cannot say do not sorrow, for you are a father.”

“ I *was* a father,” replied Sir Hugh ; “ but I am nothing now but a childless old man.”

“ Yet this I can say,” continued Barnabas, “ that God’s will must be done.”

“ I have prayed for submission,” said Sir Hugh, “ fervently prayed for it.”

“ And we know,” said the schoolmaster, “ as even a heathen declared, that, *obnixæ preces cælum penetrant*. How much then must the prayer of a Christian man avail ?”

“ I think,” replied Sir Hugh, wiping the tears from his eyes as he spoke, “ that I could have borne this stroke better, had it fallen upon me in the natural course of God’s providence. But my own heart constantly upbraids me with the reflection, that it was I who sent him away, I am sure, against his will ; I look upon myself therefore as the cause of the poor boy’s death.”

“ Sorrow, like a glass with which we contemplate the planets, enlargeth the object it sheweth,” said Barnabas, “ and seeth those spots in a bright surface, which by the common view cannot be detected. You, worthy sir, did no more by your son than many other of our

honourable gentry have done by theirs. You sent him to combat in the cause of his country ; in the cause of that religion we all uphold, and I may say, in the cause of common humanity, against the cruel Prince of Parma. You should rather rejoice in, than regret the nobleness of that spirit, which could make you so sacrifice John Fitz, for remember what saith Germanicus, as recorded by Tacitus, ‘ that his son was not dearer to him than his country’—surely such an example must be full of consolation to you.”

“ I can better find comfort in Holy Writ,” replied Sir Hugh ; “ seeing that we are taught by God himself, to look rather to the motive of our actions, than to the success of them. God knoweth I acted as I thought it best to do. If the error was in judgment, it was not a wilful perversion of the law. But tell me, master Barnabas, repeat the particulars which you received from Cornet Nesbitt, who saw John Fitz fall. I would console me, if I could, by the remembrance of his glory ; for the memory of the brave is blessed.”

“ Dear Sir Hugh,” cried the schoolmaster, “ I have often repeated them—and why dwell on so painful a theme ? ”

“ Alas, master Barnabas,” replied Sir Hugh

“have you yet to learn that there are some sources of pain that carry with them a feeling so soothing to our nature, that we learn at last to court them? They are as a tragic volume, which presents scenes of distress to the mind, but raises its feelings by the grandeur of the interest it conveys.—My boy is dead—dead ; but I love to dwell on his departed worth ; it is soothing, it is comfortable to my mind—Cornet Nesbitt saw him fall.”

“He did,” said Barnabas. “John Fitz perished nobly in an attempt to take a fortress possessed by the enemy near Lille.—General Norris commanded the forces, and your son volunteered to join the expedition. He bore the ensign of England. Our people were but a handful when compared to the enemy. They were on the very point of making good their attempt, for already had they effected a breach in the walls —John Fitz was the first to mount it ; when an unlooked-for reinforcement arriving to assist the enemy from the Prince of Parma, our people were surrounded, routed, and your gallant son, refusing to surrender the ensign of England, followed by a few determined men, attempted to cut his way through their ranks—he fell covered with wounds, whilst scarcely a man, but

Cornet Nesbitt, escaped to tell the tale. Sydney dropt a tear when he heard the fate of his young friend ; and little did the brave Sir Philip think, I ween, how soon his own life would close in the same glorious career. Norris mourned for the death of one who promised so fair, and Grave Maurice would name John Fitz as the example of all that was generous and brave."

"And this is all that remains to me," said Sir Hugh ; "his good fame—It is but a breath, yet I am soothed by it.—Farewell to thee, my dear boy ; I thought that thou wouldst have one day mourned for me, as in the course of nature and of years, my grey hairs should have gone down to the grave before thee ; but I live, and thou art dead !"

"Yet lay some comfort to heart, I beseech you," said Barnabas, "for remember the words of David, when he too sorrowed for his son, which words, according to the Vulgate, or translation now in use, signify, I may go to him, but he shall not return to me."

"True," replied the sorrowing father, "God rest his soul. I will learn to bear it patiently ; for patience with me has become necessity. What news do you bring me else ?"

"That my Lord of Leicester is recalled from

the Low Countries, by the Queen's special mandate," said Barnabas. "Ludgate is new built at the charge of the citizens of London; and one John Adams, and Richard Dibdale, have been hanged, drawn, and quartered at Tyburn, as seminary priests, having been made such by the ordination of the Bishop of Rome, who sent them into this country on treasonable practices against her Majesty."

"She has been marvellously preserved from the power of her enemies," said old Sir Hugh; "and I trust that the arm of Providence will still be extended over her; for many are the plots formed against her life, and many are the factions, the seditions, and the partisans of the Romish church still on the watch to stir up strife in England. Where is the Queen of Scots now?"

"Still at Fotheringay Castle," replied Barnabas, "a close prisoner, notwithstanding all the attempts that have been made to raise rebellion, in order to set her free. It is much noised abroad that the Parliament will take up the matter, and that it may go hard with the Queen."

"You bring me tidings indeed," said Sir Hugh. "These are dangerous times; may God mend them. But what news have we stir-

ring at home? How fares my neighbour Glanville? I have not seen him for many a long month, and to speak truth, there is one member of his family I cannot look upon, without the sight of her calling up remembrance so painful, that I have forborne to visit Kilworthy on that account."

"Glanville declines in health," replied the schoolmaster; "and people say he has of late encountered some vexations, that have added those of the mind to his bodily sufferings; for the rest, I hear nothing, except it be that Sir Nicholas Slanning is about to marry his fair ward, Mistress Margaret Champernoun."

Sir Hugh Fitz dropt his staff from his hand, and hastily exclaimed: "'To marry her! Is it possible?—Does he know?—He cannot.—Sir Nicholas Slanning, a man of honour, of ancient descent. This is not true; it is but the gossip of a country town, which marries every fair maid to the gentleman with whom she was last seen to walk in public. I will never credit it."

"It is spoken of, however, as a matter beyond doubt," answered Barnabas.

"He loved her dearer than life itself!" said Sir Hugh, in an under voice, as if talking to himself rather than to his companion; "and

his fatal choice led the way to the cause of his death. Surely ill fate attends on all who regard her. And Slanning himself told me she had rejected his suit, on the plea that he was not the man she could ever wed, even had she never loved my unhappy son; and now so soon to change her purpose!"

"Women are unstable as water, Sir Hugh," said Barnabas; "for what says the great poet Virgil?" and with the air of a pedagogue, Barnabas brought out the old verse of "*varium et mutabile*;" a quotation to be found in the mouth of every scholar when he would abuse woman-kind, from the times of Virgil down to the present generation.

"Yet," said old Sir Hugh, as if recollecting himself, "yet let me judge her kindly. She is young, lovely, and gentle, and, should it please God to remove her guardian from this world, would be friendless. Sir Nicholas Slanning is a man of worth and honour; he is devoted to her service. I know it to be so from his own acknowledgment; and it may be that his worth and honest affection have overcome the indifference with which she lately looked upon him. It is very likely to be so; since we all know how much a steady course of virtue will over-

come prejudice in a generous mind. You know, Master Barnabas, I have often told you that, for family reasons, not approving the affection of my beloved son for this maiden, I sent him abroad. He obeyed me, though he loved her better than life itself. Never shall I forget, that on the very day he parted from me, he wrung my hand, he begged me, with tears in his eyes, that though I had forbidden his marriage, still, if occasion should offer, were he living or dead, I would be kind to Margaret, and serve her if in need. It was his last prayer; and it shall not be in vain. He is dead; but I have often thought of it, as if his voice spoke to me from the grave. I have wealth, and no child to inherit. Sir Nicholas Slanning is a gentleman, but of poor estate, and Margaret is dependent on Glanville. I will see Slanning; and if a portion bestowed on his wife can add comfort to the married state, she shall not want it; and I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that if this poor maiden's first affection was unhappily crossed by me, I may, by such an act, at least, have contributed to render her remaining days more easy, more independent."

And, fully bent on this kind intention, the

bereaved and disconsolate father quitted the little garden, leaning on the arm of Barnabas, in order to return to the house, and thence despatch a messenger to request an interview with Sir Nicholas Slanning.

CHAPTER VIII.

HERMIA.—O hell! to choose love by another's eye.

LYSANDER.—Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,

War, death, or sickness, did lay siege to it.

SHAKSPEARE.

IT now becomes necessary that we should turn our attention to the fair and unhappy Margaret, in order to account for the cause of that report which, as we have seen, was so confidently repeated by Barnabas to Sir Hugh Fitz. The reader is already apprized of some of those circumstances which rendered her situation peculiarly painful; since, in addition to her deep and sincere sorrow for the loss of John Fitz, she had not the kind consolations of a happy home, or of sympathising friends, to which a mind, overwhelmed by grief, can turn for support and consolation. If she looked to her worthy guardian Glanville, she saw a man sinking under the accumulation of years, ill-health, and domestic troubles. If she turned to Sir Nicholas Slanning, she found his own interests and affections so mingled with his proffers of friend-

ship, that she could scarcely seek the latter without encouraging the former.

The manners of the time must also be taken into consideration, since, whatever may be said in favour of the golden days of good Queen Bess, they were not the days either of general or individual liberty, as we are *now* taught to feel and understand the word, in these times of rational and enlightened freedom. It is but by comparison that liberty then rose from her fetters; though true it is that, contrasted with the reign of Mary (the faggot-piler), and of Henry the Eighth (the tyrant and butcher), there certainly *was* freedom. However shadowy and imperfect the outline, it was like the first view of a noble edifice, when it breaks upon us after a night of darkness in the twilight of early dawn. Arbitrary measures ruled the court. They were found in the council, and even amongst the people, and not in a small degree in the families of the nobility and gentry of the realm. Marriages in these days, at least amongst persons of any condition in society, were, with few exceptions, made up by the parents, guardians, and relatives of the parties; and so far had custom, however arbitrary, established itself into a law, that a child's resist-

ance, in these matters, was held as a thing so rare and disgraceful, as to be attended with extreme peril; so that few, even of the male sex, dared to stand up for the rational freedom of being, at least, consulted in a matter where their own happiness was so materially concerned. And if men were thus incompetent to resist the tyranny of custom, how much less could women contend on the same point! Sons and daughters, nephews and nieces, wards and dependents, were disposed of in marriage, much in the same way as a soldier is now turned over to the command of a particular general or division, and with as much consultation of his own free-will in the exchange. To serve and to obey was the word; and woe be to the rebel who should dare resist. It has been seen, that even the indulgence of Sir Hugh Fitz to his beloved son was suspended in the case of Margaret; and that he had broken off the match, and sent his son abroad, without any consideration to the feelings of the young man, by his own parental authority.

We have somewhat dwelt on these arbitrary customs of the time, in order that our readers may fully appreciate the sort of influence which acted on the mind of Margaret; since few well-

constituted minds, however strong, can wholly shake off the power of that custom, to which time and general observance have given the authority of law itself.

The subject of Sir Nicholas Slanning's addresses had, of late, been repeatedly urged upon her attention by her guardian, who believed that in so doing he acted the kindest, as well as the wisest, part. "Young maidens, beloved child of my care," would he say to Margaret, "need the constant eye of a protector. They are in this world, filled as it is with sin and sorrow, like some delicate plant, which, but for the manly stay of the noble tree it clings to for support, would be torn and scattered abroad by the first rude tempest that might assail it. A woman is a thing to be loved and cherished, but, feeble in herself, and fragile in her nature, alone she is unequal to encounter evil, or to repel the shafts of malice ; and too often she sinks before the one, and is blighted by the other. And who can protect woman like a husband ? His guardian rights, his stronger sense, his power to walk with safety through the paths of life, his courage and generous care, are all as the armour of proof to defend her against mischance and evil ; whilst his

countenance gives a sanction to her pleasures, and his tenderness a relief to her cares, that no other bosom could afford. He, by the laws of God and man, is her liege lord, her head, the pilot who takes the helm for the safety of the vessel, that by his manly hand he may carry her, unharmed, through the shoals and breakers of adversity, into the desired haven of her rest. Think of this, Margaret, and remember I am old. In a brief space, your guardian may be laid low; and should you pour your complaints of sorrow over the spot where he rests, the wind, as it waves the dank grass that lies above his head, will alone make answer to them."

When arguments like these were urged by Glanville, to induce his ward to listen to the honourable proposal of Sir Nicholas, though she dared not openly contradict her guardian, she replied but with her tears. Sometimes she would leave his presence: and then frequently encountered the harsh looks, sharp speeches, and jealous remarks of Dame Glanville, or, what was worse, the cold sarcasm, and satirical insinuations of Lady Howard. Still she was resolute; and the only concession obtained from her was that of receiving the visits of Sir Ni-


cholas with a melancholy civility whenever he chose to make them.

Such was the state of her mind, when the return of Standwich (who had been absent, it may be supposed, on some of his dark and dangerous missions) to the neighbourhood of the cave, once more led to her secret interviews with this man, who, it must be remembered, held a powerful sway over her mind, and had done so from infancy, whilst she lived in France, during the life-time of her supposed father, Sir Frederick Champernoun. A man like Standwich, whose informants were numerous, soon gains intelligence of whatever may have passed in his absence. The death, therefore, of John Fitz, the grief of Margaret, and the proposal of Sir Nicholas, with her disinclination to accept it, were all things soon known to his intriguing and tyrannical spirit.

In the midst of many vicious qualities, Standwich yet retained two which, but for his crimes, would have entitled him to respect and pity. One was a contempt for worldly riches; and the other, his sincere affection for his unhappy and illegitimate daughter. For her sake, to spare her fame and feelings, he had resolved

that she should never know the fatal secret of her birth, and that she should never know himself in any other light than that of a friend deputed to keep a watchful eye over her, and as the spiritual guardian and director of her faith. In these respects, he knew his influence was unlimited; and he resolved to use it by means he deemed irresistible, as the circumstances of the time might require. Though his interviews with her were but rare, on account of the danger which might accrue to him in case of discovery (as he had taught Margaret to believe he was one of those seminary priests against whom the laws were in full force), yet were these interviews always impressive, and often decisive, whenever he wished to gain any compliance, on her part, to the rigours or superstitious practices he enjoined.

Standwich, in the course of his wandering life, had held much intercourse with that dangerous body of men, the Jesuits; and his apt mind had already imbibed the specious and artful mode of argument, their peculiar manner of acting on the weaknesses and passions of their fellow creatures, in short that most dangerous of all qualities, the power of using sophistry as a weapon to subdue and enslave reason. Armed



with power so fearful, Standwich, his soul raised to the highest pitch of enthusiasm to work his own will on the mind of Margaret, now sought an interview with her, to enforce her free consent, if such it could be called, to the marriage with Sir Nicholas Slanning; an object that appeared to him the most to be desired for her own good, since Standwich, in addition to his knowledge of Sir Nicholas being a man of worth, believed him to be at heart a sincere member of the church of Rome, though for the present he complied with the outward usages of the reformed church. Could Standwich effect this match, he had yet a deeper view in regard to Slanning, which he hoped to accomplish by the influence of Margaret. This was at present, however, a subject for future speculation. The marriage demanded his present attention. He resolved, therefore, no longer to delay his purpose.

Of the particulars concerning this remarkable interview, we can state but a few circumstances. That they were powerful, and even fearful, may be gathered from the result. On quitting Standwich, Margaret was seen, after her return to Kilworthy, to seek her own chamber. A deadly paleness was on her cheek, her eye

wandered in restless agitation, she trembled excessively, and her air and manner betrayed an abstraction so remarkable, that, when called down to attend her guardian in the evening, he became greatly alarmed for her health, and kindly inquired into the cause. She seemed unwilling to speak plainly, and Glanville, judging her communications would be more free if made to him alone, took an opportunity, after the evening repast was ended, to lead her into his own apartment, where he endeavoured in the most soothing manner to learn the cause of the agitation he had remarked.

For some time she answered but slightly, or evaded his questions, sighed deeply, and at length burst into a flood of tears. Glanville, who since the death of Fitz had often witnessed her distress of mind, naturally imputed her present burst of feeling to something connected with her memory of that event, and kindly attempted the task of consolation. He bade her be seated by his side, parted with his hand the hair that drooped over her forehead in great disorder, and taking her hand within his own, conjured her for God's sake to be comforted.

“Margaret,” he said, “tears are due to the

dead ; their memory is a deposit which the laws of God and man alike hold sacred. Cherish, Margaret, the memory of Fitz, but do not despair. In gentle natures, grief will have its course. Your sorrow has had all that indulgence which tenderness could require ; but this ceaseless, this wearing sorrow, these never-ending and bitter regrets, are rebellion against God. It is God who lent to us every friend we hold on earth ; but they are *his*, not ours : and if he resumes that spirit he has placed in an earthly house but for a time, who shall say to him nay ? Who shall strive with the Almighty ? The spirit of the dead is with its Maker, the body we return in pious care to the dust ; but we must not bury ourselves with that dust, seeing that every mortal creature who still liveth, is but like the soldier placed by a great commander at his post, there to stand, and there to meet the front of the battle, nor must he retreat at his own will. One man drops, another supplies his place, till the day is past. Such are human creatures in this vale of woe. And, oh happy ! thrice happy is that man who mourns for the honoured dead, not for the guilty, not for one violently cut off by the laws, even in the midst of sin."

Glanville spoke these words in a manner so deeply feeling, with such an earnestness of expression, as he pressed the hand of Margaret within his own in the agitation of the moment, that she was roused from a sense of her own misery, and raising her languid eyes, looked in his face. She was shocked at observing the paleness of her guardian's countenance; and following the kind impulse of her feelings, exclaimed, "My dear and honoured friend, what, alas! have I done to call up these emotions? I know your kindness, I know all you would urge. I will, I will be advised—I came to tell you of this—I—"

"Margaret," continued Glanville, without heeding her words, "look upon me. I am more an object of pity than yourself; and I tell you so, since I know sorrow is prone to find relief in the sight of the greater misery of another."

"It is a weak feeling, scarcely a worthy one," replied Margaret, "but so it is; and such is the nature of the human heart, with truth I confess it, that though I never find comfort with the happy, yet I have known some relief in the sympathy of congenial sorrow."

"And mine is a blighting sorrow," said

Glanville; "it is such as would shock thy young heart, did I but name it. I forbear the recital, for my own sake as well as yours. Yet thus much I will tell you, Margaret, and more than I have ever yet acknowledged to a human ear—I sorrow for a guilty child! Think of that, think what are the agonies of a father, who believes in the punishment denounced against sin in this book!" (he placed his hand on a Bible, that lay on the table before him, as he spoke.) "I doubt her salvation," continued Glanville, in a tone of voice that made Margaret shudder as it met her ear. "Better, far better, had I seen her die in innocence, in infancy, than have lived to witness what I witnessed. Ask me no questions, demand no explanation; the horrid tale shall never reach you from my lips. How I envied Sir Hugh Fitz when I heard him tell the manner of his son's death. Yes, I envied him. He could drop tears for his loss whilst good men kept him company, there was no shame to wither the source of manly sorrow."

"Think, Sir," said Margaret, mildly, "of your own lesson, which you but now taught me, of submission to God's providence."

"I do, I do," said Glanville. "Oh thou, my Maker and my Judge, even in these dark pas-

sages of thy providence, teach me to trust in thee ! I will never murmur more, though my grief be dark as the clouds of Egypt, when there was no light, because of thy wrath."

Her guardian was silent ; he folded his hands together, pressed them against his forehead, and after a few minutes, occupied as it seemed with his own sad thoughts, he turned to Margaret, and said in a more composed manner, " our woes begin with our neglect of duty. Disobedience on the part of man was the first violation of God's commandment, and then came universal sin and death. Let this be a lesson to the young, that they stray not from the path of duty enjoined to them by their elders and their friends. Let this be a warning to you."

" It is, it shall be," exclaimed Margaret vehemently ; and, as if glad to seize on the moment of conviction to act in conformity to what she had been made to believe her own duty, yet fearful to trust herself, should such a moment pass away, she rose hastily from her seat, threw herself on her knees before her guardian, and said in a voice deep and tremulous with emotion, " I will yield to your will—I will comply with what has been so fearfully urged upon me."

" What !" exclaimed Glanville in surprise,

“ How am I to understand this? May I hope that you will accept Sir Nicholas Slanning? Is that, Margaret, the meaning of your words? will you do this?”

“ I must, I must,” cried Margaret in hurried accents; “ the sacrifice *must*, it *shall* be made.”

“ The sacrifice !” said Glanville, “ it *must* be made. What mean you? This is strange, very strange, so often as I have urged the suit of that honourable man without avail—and now, even before I have named it, that thus you should offer your compliance, and in such words that, though I rejoice to hear your purpose, yet I confess, the manner in which it is made known to me appears most extraordinary.”

“ It is indeed,” replied Margaret; “ but the conflict is past—I yield, I consent; spare me, I beseech you, the rest—spare me all questions.”

Glanville held her hand, it trembled violently. “ Rise dear, Margaret,” he said, “ I wish you to become the wife of Slanning, yet not in this manner. I did hope that time, youth, the affection of so worthy a gentleman, and your own good sense, would have produced some happy change. I would not now discourage you, yet I must say, you speak more like a mourner than a destined bride.”

“ I am indeed a mourner,” replied Margaret. “ Look at these garments,” she continued, as she cast her eye upon the sable dress in which she was attired ; “ I can change them at a word, but not so my feelings. My mind is darker than these robes. I will not deceive you. I have hitherto spoken truth, and I will do so still. I loved John Fitz. He is dead ; in this world lost to me for ever. His spirit is with God, and far removed from the brief anxieties of this mortal life. He can now feel no sorrow, though Margaret should live heart-broken, and linger out her remaining years in misery. It is not of him, therefore, I would now speak. But thus much I owe to truth, which bids me declare, that even had I never known John Fitz, had I never given to him my early affections, Sir Nicholas Slanning would not have been the object of my own free choice. But you have all had the rule over me ; I *have* consented : and, if such an unhappy being as I am can be worthy his acceptance, let him take the poor hand he has hitherto sought so earnestly to gain.”

“ You speak the words of a disordered fancy,” said Glanville ; “ you look upon the living with the feelings that belong to the dead. A brief space of time, change of scene, and

above all, a sense of duty, will, I trust, soon teach a heart, generous and good like yours, to be just to the man who has so long loved you, even against hope. Think how kind, how frank, how worthy is the nature of Sir Nicholas Slanning. I doubt not he will make you a dear husband, and that you will return his love as should a loyal wife to an affectionate lord."

"I have never been unjust to the merits of Sir Nicholas," said Margaret. "I know all his worth, and I lament that one so noble should have placed his affections where they are returned thus coldly."

"What can be your objections?" said Glanville, "since you acknowledge the worth of his character."

"Alas," replied Margaret, "there are some feelings of the heart, so delicate in their nature, so easily mistaken, that, like an instrument we play upon, they will but jar in discord, unless they vibrate to that skilful touch which can bring them into harmony. Did I state the various feelings that tell me, how little my mind is in accord with Sir Nicholas Slanning's, I fear I should scarcely be understood by you."

"These are but maidenly fears," said Glanville, "the coyness of a girl who has yet to

learn that the principles of a man constitute his worth, and not the varnish of his outward accomplishments; and that one who, like Sir Nicholas, is complete in all the qualities that adorn a gentleman, in honour, in mind, cannot but make a dear husband to any woman. Shall I see Slanning, and rejoice his heart with this good news? I will send to him this very night."

"No," said Margaret, "no, not to-night, I beseech you. Give me a few hours to compose my mind. It has been grievously shaken, and I would fain try to meet him as I ought to do. Though my heart is chill, yet I would wish to shew that I am not dead to every feeling of gratitude. I owe Sir Nicholas much; much for his faithful devotion to my service, so long as his friend lived; and much for that affection he has offered to me. He has acted generously, and I would fain requite it with my esteem. To-morrow I will meet him in your presence."

"It shall be so," said Glanville. "If I might inquire, yet I would not press the subject on you if it is painful to your feelings, I would ask the cause of a change, so sudden, in your mind."

"I am not changed," replied Margaret, mournfully, "my mind, I fear, can never change."

“ But your purpose,” said Glanville, “ surely that is changed, and has been suddenly expressed to me, and, as I think, your resolution is as suddenly formed.”

“ I acknowledge it,” replied Margaret, “ yet I would beseech you to forbear farther inquiry. If my compliance is agreeable to you, there rest satisfied ; and do not press me on a point that can avail nothing, but to add another wound, where there are already too many that bleed afresh. You have urged me to wed Sir Nicholas Slanning—my consent is given. And now, my dear guardian, my friend, my father—for such I will call you, your kindness deserves it of me—give me but your blessing ; and the blessing, like the prayer of the good, may avail much ; it may draw down some comfort on this almost broken heart.”

“ May heaven be with you, my dearest Margaret,” said Glanville. “ May the sorrows of thy mind be hushed to peace, and may every earthly blessing be on thy young and innocent head. To-morrow, then, we meet.”

“ Aye, to-morrow,” answered Margaret ; “ till then, farewell.”

On quitting her kind guardian she retired to her own chamber, where, as soon as she entered,

she threw herself into a chair, and giving way to her feelings, burst into an agony of tears. In some measure relieved by this effort of nature from the choking sensation with which she had been oppressed, she sighed deeply, arose, paced her chamber with dejected steps, and at length softly stole to the window and opened the lattice, in the hope to obtain some relief from the fresh air.

It was a beautiful night, towards the close of autumn. A stillness, like that of death, reigned without, save when it was now and then interrupted by the night breeze, that stirred the withered leaves as they lay scattered on the ground where they had fallen. To the mind fraught with melancholy, every object affords a new subject for painful thought, every thing is looked upon through the medium of its own darkened vision. A mind, labouring under such a state of feeling, may be compared to the morbid appetite of disease, which craves for food to increase its own maladies. The night was chill, but the sky clear and blue, and the starry firmament twinkled and glittered in thousands and ten thousands of brilliant lights. But to the eye of Margaret there was nothing in their aspect that could inspire one cheerful thought; and

the rush of the little river that wound along the valley at some distance, and which by day could scarcely be heard, now seemed to her dull ear as if it murmured with a sad and oppressive sound. Every breeze, to her fancy, as it sighed along the thick avenues of the old trees, came, like a plaint for the dying or the dead, as if nature bewailed the fall of the year, whilst leaf by leaf dropt around her, even as she bewailed hope after hope withering before her view.

“Such am I,” murmured Margaret, whilst she pursued her melancholy train of reflection. “Even such a thing to weep over as this sad season—blighted, fallen, not a hope left. All with me is cold and cheerless, like that Winter which soon will succeed these last sighs of expiring Autumn’s breath. But it must be—I feel it must be—Standwich has pronounced my doom. And oh! with what fearful threats has he led me on to this gulph, that I must leap, or turn to meet a yet more dreadful destiny. What a man is Standwich! how severe—how singular—and yet, how awfully just! Surely some spell, too powerful to be the work of human means, bows me down before him. Yes, it must be—it must be the will of God that he should thus have the power to influence my will

I must submit; I will teach this rebel heart submission. I will endeavour to forget—to forget!” continued Margaret, and clasping her hands together, her eyes streaming with tears, she raised them to look on that bright queen of night, that now in the full majesty of her attendant stars, unfolded her lustre, without a cloud to intercept her course.

“Ye glorious host!” said Margaret, “ye planets, and ye countless stars of heaven!” if, as some think, ye are worlds higher and purer than our own, where the spirits of the blessed ascend when they have fled their mortal clay, to quire in company with cherubim, angels, and seraphim, that stand before the throne of Him who made ye all; if such ye be, and if one spirit of your spheres can look down upon this earth from his immortal rest, O may that spirit now look on me. Forgive, shade of the departed! the sad wanderings of my distracted thoughts; forgive the wish that I might forget thee; and if thou art permitted to linger near me, whisper peace to my sad heart, and be as are the angels of God, a minister of comfort. Teach me to trust in Him in whose sight a thousand years are but as yesterday, and who can pour balm on the wounded mind to still its

conflict, as easily as he can cast a calm upon the troubled waters, to bid them be hushed in peace."

Exhausted by the various emotions she had experienced during this eventful day, Margaret at length retired to rest. Anxious thoughts, for a time, kept her waking ; till, worn out by the very conflict of her feelings, she at last found relief in " tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep." Yet, long after her senses were locked in slumber, the tears she had so abundantly shed still hung upon her beautiful cheek, like drops of dew on some flower, whose drooping petals are closed to rest amidst the gloom and melancholy of the night.

CHAPTER X.

Marriage is a matter of more worth,
Than to be dealt in by attorneyship.

SHAKSPEARE.

BEFORE we continue our narrative, it becomes necessary we should advert to former circumstances connected with Sir Nicholas Slanning's suit to Margaret, as they will be found important in the sequel of our tale, though we shall here state them as briefly as possible.

During the life of John Fitz, Slanning had acted the part of a faithful friend; and it was by his means that Margaret received intelligence from her lover, of his welfare and continued affection. When the sad news came of his untimely death, Slanning was sincerely grieved by the event; and, with a laudable feeling, sought by every means to learn the most minute particulars that could be gathered relative to his unhappy fate. He sorrowed for him as he would for a brother. Regard for the memory of his friend, and for the unhappy lady to

whom that friend was betrothed, made Slanning think that the task of consolation had now devolved on him. With all the ardour of a generous nature, therefore, did he attempt it. The theme was a welcome one to Margaret ; for when one has lost a beloved object, who but feels a melancholy pleasure in talking over, with a sympathising mind, the qualities, the virtues, and the tenderness of the deceased ? There is no bond that so readily unites friendship, or produces intimacy, as a sympathy in sorrow. No wonder, therefore, that Margaret soon learnt to look upon Sir Nicholas Slanning as if he had been her brother ; and treated him, therefore, with all the open-hearted kindness, and even tenderness, of a sister ; wholly unsuspecting as she was, to what this confidence would lead.

The many amiable qualities, and especially the affectionate heart of Margaret, all conspired to raise in Slanning, without even his being conscious of its progress, feelings for her to which he had as yet been a stranger. She was beautiful, too, as well as unhappy. And what to the young and brave is more captivating than the sight of beauty in distress ? There is about it that inexpressible charm which blends admiration with pity, and proves the truth of the poet,

when he declares, that “pity melts the mind to love.”

Slanning found, at length, that those feelings of sympathy which at first had inspired him with a wish to dry the tears of Margaret for her sake, now urged him to do so for his own. But, fearful of losing the freedom of conversation in which she indulged him, and of her kindness, by a premature disclosure, he became wavering, and doubtful how to act. It was at this juncture that Glanville, who had remarked the attention Slanning paid to his ward, one day took an opportunity to question him about it; and Slanning’s open temper induced him speedily to confess the truth. Glanville, thinking how advantageous it would be for Margaret to become the wife of so worthy a man, encouraged Sir Nicholas in the plan of prosecuting his addresses. He pointed out to him that after the melancholy circumstances that had taken place, a great allowance must be made for the feelings of Margaret; but she was very young, and grief could not endure for ever: no doubt time, the great physician to all wounded minds, Slanning’s devoted attention, his honest affection and his worth, would, and must, all conspire to win for him her regard. It might

be slowly gained ; but the foundation thus deliberately fixed would be permanent, and of such strength as to bear the test of years. Besides, she was of a pious, an excellent disposition ; had a heart peculiarly alive to gratitude ; and these were all feelings likely to work a great change in favour of Slanning's suit.

No listeners are so easily convinced as those who attend to arguments they above all things desire to find true. Slanning, therefore, without much hesitation, assented to every word that dropped from Glanville's lips ; and from that hour, her guardian's consent obtained, he resolved on attempting to win her for his bride. Although Slanning was not a man of the most refined ideas, still he was by no means insensible to the delicacy which renders a man jealous of marrying a woman in whose heart he has no interest ; yet he was not a critical observer of the human mind, so that he often deceived himself with hopes that existed only in his own desire to find them true. He had not that delicacy of tact which can examine by slight circumstances, by a word, or even a look, into the secret recesses of the heart, where the lover would wish to trace the confirmation of his hopes in decided characters ; a circumstance

the dearer to his feelings, inasmuch as that hidden page is not designed to be laid open to the common eye of the observer.

The kindness of Margaret's manner frequently deceived him, though to do so was the farthest from her thoughts; and he would argue thus with his own mind: "Are not my feelings changed? Did I not once regard Margaret as the betrothed of my dearest friend? On his death, did I not sorrow for him as well as she did? Did I not sympathise with her, till doing so became the very means of my loving her? I therefore am changed, and why may not she change also? There was, too, if the truth must be spoken, a shade of vanity in Slanning's character, which, in spite of his better judgment, his frank manners, and sound sense, sometimes led him to view things through a false medium; and when this weakness co-operated with a strong passion, its power was two-fold; so that his own mind whispered to him the suggestion, which he would have blushed openly to acknowledge, that now John Fitz was dead, it was not possible but his devotion to Margaret must act on her affections in his favour, since there was nothing in himself that, in his opinion, could be in any degree objectionable in the eyes of a

young woman. So complicated is the human mind in its feelings and its motions, that, like some intricate machine, there are not only wheels continually at work of a plain and obvious nature, but counterbalancing powers within, which, though they may be necessary, would never be detected, or understood, by the eye of the common observer.

Thus such feelings existed in the heart of Slanning, that at one moment, on any kindness being shown by Margaret, he fancied himself secretly beloved by her; at another, chilled by some word or action of her's, he thought her indifferent to him; whilst sometimes he conjectured that she felt but maiden delicacy in not accepting him, because he had been introduced to her to act in behalf of another. These doubts were sometimes paramount; but the arguments of Glanville easily bore them down. In short, he suffered himself to think that he was convinced by Glanville, whilst in fact his own heart was the advocate which persuaded him that she was not indifferent to his suit.

We felt it necessary to say thus much, to account for that readiness with which Sir Nicholas Slanning received the information from Glanville, that Margaret had at length yielded

her consent to accept his long-proffered affections. This acceptance at once decided the point; she was no longer, then, indifferent to him. When the mind is balancing between two things, one of which is dreaded and the other desired, a feather dropt into the scale of the latter will decide the preponderance. Thus prepossessed, Sir Nicholas Slanning readily consented to shut his eyes to whatever might seem unfavourable, whilst her having so long denied his suit was set down to the score of coyness, and the reflection that women of the highest worth are not the most easy to be gained. We shall not dwell upon the days of courtship which followed Margaret's acceptance of Slanning. He was a daily visitant at Kilworthy; but though an accepted suitor, the rigid manners of the times rendered it decorous that she should now only receive his visits in the presence of the family, and seldom, if ever, alone; a circumstance (as Margaret's manner was composed and serene) which induced Slanning to have no opportunity of finding the traces of those formidable obstacles to his hopes which he had so much reason to dread, and which he now believed no longer existed in her feelings towards him.

Such was the state of things when the marriage between Margaret and Sir Nicholas began to afford a subject for the gossip of a country town ; by these means it had reached the ears of Barnabas, who, as we have seen, conveyed the intelligence to Sir Hugh Fitz. Public report now added, that the purposed marriage was to take place in a very short space of time ; and some of the more knowing gossips went even so far as to name the day, the church, and the hour.

CHAPTER XI.

What cracker is this same, that deafs our ears
With this abundance of superfluous breath?

SHAKSPEARE.

LEAVING for the present Sir Nicholas Slanning, highly elated at the thoughts of the approach of that day which would make him the husband of Margaret, we now must turn the attention of our reader to another quarter, and shall at once convey him to the scene of action.

Not far distant from that extent of high lands called Roborough Down, by the side of the road leading to Plymouth from Tavistock, there stood, at the date of our narrative, a little hostelrie, known by the name of the Old Magpie, as a painted emblem of that talkative bird intimated to the passing traveller—a mode of making known the proper appellation of such a house as was almost necessary in those days, when few of the lower orders could read.

The addition of the word *old* was given to the magpie in question, in the same way as that of

Dowager is appended to a Countess or a Duchess, as a distinction to any junior claimant of the same title; a new house of public resort, on the Plymouth road, having also hung out a magpie, as a decoy-bird for the customers who were wont to frequent the old establishment.

The Old Magpie was a dilapidated edifice, with narrow latticed windows and a picturesque gable, that looked half tumbling down, over which the rose-bush and honeysuckle had hung their branches, as if to hide the breaches which the great conqueror, Time, had made in its once formidable walls. A huge stack of old chimnies, greatly disproportioned to the size of the dwelling, stood in their dusky bulk upright and unshaken, notwithstanding the perpetual war of high winds to which they had been exposed for nearly two hundred years on this elevated station: a circumstance which showed that if the architect who built the house had little taste for proportion, he had a just estimate of stability. A rudely arched door, under a stone porch, hung with ivy, gave entrance to the kitchen; and above the threshold, was suspended what might be termed at this period the proper cognizance of a publican—a bush, to denote that wine was sold within. “ Good wine needs no

bush," says the old proverb ; but, in the present instance, the bush was the substitute, and not the symbol of wine, either good or bad ; for the Old Magpie, much crest-fallen and injured in business since the appearance of its younger rival, had so gone to decay, that, beyond cider and ale, it could boast no liquor to refresh the traveller.

The house stood in a little garden that was enclosed by a low hedge (as it is here called) of loose stones, put together without mortar or cement ; and so contrived that the wind, when it blows strongly, may pass freely through them ; a precaution that hinders the whole fabric from being thrown down. A few dwarf trees, with round heads like cabbages, grew towards the west (that being the quarter whence the winds on these high lands prevail), and stretched out their branches in an ungainly manner in the opposite direction. The garden could also boast a few straggling elders, some beds of potherbs, and a straw bee-hive, with a rose-bush or two, flourishing amid an abundance of dock-leaves, nettles, and weeds.

It was at the door of this decaying hostelry, that, one evening, a poor traveller presented himself, mounted on a horse, whose lean condi-

tion and shabby furniture seemed to declare that his owner was a person of some mean state, or that it was merely a hired hackney for the accommodation of this humble rider. Be this as it may, both man and beast looked fatigued ; and as the traveller dismounted, and gave the horse to the charge of a half-ragged boy, who acted as ostler, he desired it might be speedily refreshed with a feed of corn, and having given this command, himself turned to enter the house.

The arrival of any customer, poor or rich, in the decline of business, was now become a matter of some consequence to Grace Morton, a lone widow, and sole proprietor of the Magpie and its dependencies. She now stepped forward therefore beyond the threshold, to welcome in the traveller, and presented before his eyes in her own person the figure of a neat little old woman, wearing a close mob and pinners, surmounted by a steeple-crowned hat of black silk, much the worse for wear. Her face was round, and had that look of honesty and good-nature which never belies the heart. There was, too, a touch of care and anxiety about the brow, and she seemed altogether such a one of whom it might be said, that she had suffered this world's evils

with a patient spirit. Grace Morton dropped her usual curtesy, accompanied with her usual salutation of, a "good even," to the traveller, "and would he be pleased to step inside her house?"

The traveller accepted courteously Grace's civility, and followed her into an apartment, in which the extreme neatness of the landlady had attempted to blend something of the decorations of a parlour with the utility of the kitchen. The large tunneled fire-place, with its stone front as flat and as broad as a tomb-stone, shewed the apartment itself to be the latter. A peat fire was mouldering on the hearth, above which hung, by a crane and chains, a large black pot, whose smell was by no means unpromising for the evening repast. The rafters displayed a few pieces of dried bacon, suspended near a pair of boots, not unlike a couple of mortars; and resting within a cross-barred frame-work of oak might be seen an old gun or two, and many an implement of husbandry. The dressers were as white as it was possible for well-scoured boards to be, and exhibited in regular rows a phalanx of pewter plates and wooden platters, with a nosegay set in a broken china jug by way of ornament. The floor was spread with clean

sand; and a few prints (or wood-cuts as we should now call them) were seen hanging against the walls. Their subjects were from holy writ, and represented the sacrifice of Abraham, the meeting of Ruth and Boaz, with that of Rebecca and the servant at the well; all these goodly personages being clad in the costume of the time of Edward the VIth, and having a verse of scripture, explanatory of their subjects, in the black letter, at the foot of each print.

The traveller, who followed Grace into the kitchen, was a young man, poorly dressed, thin, and even emaciated in his appearance. His features were regular, and probably had once deserved the name of handsome; but sickness, or poverty, or both conjoined, had given to their contour that hollow and sharp look, which affords too clear a display of bone and muscle to be agreeable. His eye was languid, and his cheek ashy white. The hostess hastened to seat him upon the high-backed settle that stood near the ample hearth; and observing the evening was cold, and that he must have had a bleak ride, she threw some faggots on the smouldering peat.

As the traveller took his seat upon the settle, he observed an old man with a long beard, who sat, or rather crouched, on a low stool within

the space of the chimney ; and whilst he seemed to be refreshing himself with sipping, between whiles, a cup of drink that stood by him, he appeared anxious to lay in a store of warmth ere he quitted his comfortable nook. He now would stretch forward the right foot, so as nearly to touch the dogs that supported the faggots, and then he would extend the left in the same manner, and spread the open palms of his hands over the smoking wood, till the faggots began to crack and blaze so as to oblige him to draw back.

Whilst thus intent on the comforts of his body, the old man's mind seemed employed in considering the poor traveller who had taken his seat upon the settle, and he eyed him narrowly, whenever the stranger's eyes were elsewhere engaged ; for, perhaps from natural modesty, or from a sense of his humble condition, he had shewn, by a slight tinge of red on his pale cheek, that such close observation was embarrassing to his feelings. The good hostess now asked the guest " what he would please to make use of in her house."

" Any trifling refreshment," he said ; " a manchet of bread, and a cup of fair water would be sufficient for him. But he could wish

his horse to be taken care of, as he was desirous to prosecute his journey, and the poor animal was much jaded by the badness of the roads."

The old man in the chimney corner, who lost not a word of what passed, and in whose bosom feelings of compassion were strongly excited by the poor and sickly appearance of the traveller, thinking his age gave a license to his speech, thus unceremoniously addressed him ; " Young man, you should be a stranger to these roads it seems, or to any roads in England, if you know not that it is somewhat unusual to call only for fair water at a house of public resort. It is the scattering of the guest that maketh the gathering of the host. This woman is a widow, and thy reckoning for such fare will be as small as that of an alms dropt into a beggar's dish. The house hath no wine, but the ale is of sufficient strength, and if it may be that poverty and not thy will to spend thy penny, to help to make up the widow's pound, holds thee to this low diet, I will freely bestow on thee a cup of ale, and something of substance to keep it company ; for thy leanness is the leanness of want, and the pining of sickness is in thy cheek. Good

woman of the Magpie," continued the old man, as he turned to her, "I see the youth is in need; set before him food, that he may comfort his heart before he passes on, and I will be at the charges of the same."

"I thank you much for this kindness," said the traveller, "and to speak truly, you have rightly judged, that my present condition is a poor one; yet it is not so poor but I can make as good payment for the cup of fair water I require as if it were of a better liquor."

"Nay, then," cried the old man, who doubtless our reader will recognize for Levi the Jew, "it is folly to call for water in a public inn. If thou lackest but water, good youth there run through these hills numberless silver streams, pure and pleasant as the wells of Sechu, and as refreshing to the thirsty soul as dew upon the parched plains of Syria. To give coin for water is folly, when it may be had for nought. It is like a giving of substance for shadow. If thou hast money, well—spend thy money, quaff a cup of ale; it will do good to the widow, and thou wilt have thy pennyworth for thy penny."

The poor traveller could not repress a smile at this singular mixture of liberality and close-

ness so oddly expressed by the Jew, who seemed, when money was the question, to feel as great an interest in the prudent disposal of the stranger's coin as if it had been his own. Now whether it was the mild manners, or the delicate health, or the smile, which gave an uncommonly pleasant expression to the countenance of the stranger, and won the good-will of the hostess as well as that of the Jew, we cannot say, but certain it is she settled the debate by bringing forward part of a cold fowl, and a tankard of foaming ale, which she placed before him, and bid him refresh himself, adding that, poor as she was, they would not quarrel about the payment, if he was in distress. Again the traveller assured her she was mistaken; that recent illness and fatigue had deprived him of all appetite, but that he would endeavour to taste a mouthful, both as an acknowledgment of her kindness, and for the benefit of the house.

Whilst he was yet speaking, a loud rapping on the door of the little inn disturbed the inmates of the kitchen, and the cry of "House! house, I say," met their ears. "Alack," said the landlady, as she started up and eagerly ran towards the door, "and who may this be, I trow, whose patience will not be so constant

as to keep him within bound, whilst a poor woman can but run to the door? Surely he will beat it down! Well, the Magpie will have a store of guests to-night, let what will come of it;" and away went the good hostess to open to the new comer.

The hospitable door revolved upon its hinges, and gave entrance to the stranger, who talked fast and loud all the way into the kitchen, giving especial directions that his horse should be cared for; and in the following words responded to some civil speech addressed to him by the hostess, as she had managed to slip it in between his repeated injunctions concerning his beast. "Company say you, woman? why, so much the better, say I; a pottle of sack and good fellowship are right welcome to me. But prithee hold thy peace. One magpie is enough for one house; and that which hangs above the door shall suffice me. Where be these companions?" and just then coming into the kitchen as he spoke, the red nose, blood-shot eyes, and square shoulders of the stout pirate, Captain Noseworthy, were immediately recognized by the Jew.

The captain also knew Levi, and lost no time in claiming old acquaintance, "What, Sheva!"

he exclaimed, "Ha! ha! old Truepenny, art thou there? as the player says to the ghost under the stage. And whither art thou bound, man? whither goest thou, to take true goods in exchange for false coin?"

"Thy tongue is false to say so," cried Levi. "I journey towards the good town of Plymouth on mine own occasions, having certain commodities there to be disposed of; and as I hear that the *Double Rose* is returned from her voyage to the New World, I would fain see the captain of her, as I would wish in the next outfit to venture some traffic of mine own with our merchants."

"What, you traffic to the El Dorado, man!" said Noseworthy, "the very Solomon's temple, as I may say, of the Jews, where all is overlaid with gold—where the bears too are red, and the pole-cat hath furs that might line the kirtle of our queen, and where the very rats have tails like silver, and jewels are as plenty as blackberries? But wherefore not adventure thine own person, Levi? Trust me, a commodity of reverence like thyself would go to a good market, should they need a broker for their metals; and his most pagan majesty of Terrenata would make thee as welcome as he did

Drake, by whose beard he swore that he and Sir Francis were of one religion, seeing that they neither of them worshipped stocks and stones like the Portuguese, but an honest devil of their own fancying, that spouted fire like the mouth of a British culverin. But talking is dry work. Hostess ! what can your house afford to a seafaring gentleman, who has ventured a voyage hither on the four legs of a horse, instead of riding the high seas on the back of a bulky carrack ?”

“ Her house,” the Hostess said, “ could produce nothing better than cider, unless his worship should prefer a cup of spiced ale.”

“ Cider !” cried Noseworthy ; “ I will none of it. It is sour, and should be kept for penitents on Shrove Tuesday. Your sack is the thing for me. Sack is the king of good liquors ; your ale but a viceroy. Yet when the flowing cup of sack, that sparkles round the brim like gems in a crown-royal, cannot be had, why then we must even content ourselves, as do the Irish kernes, with the deputy of majesty. So, warm the ale, hostess, without delay, spice a good brown toast, and let it swim on the top plump and hot, and we will prove the strength of the liquor. Levi, you shall join us ; I hate a

solitary toper; and this traveller here, who looks, by his whey face, as if he lacked a cup to warm his heart, and send up some of the blood of it into his cheeks, he too shall have a pull at the pot, and right welcome."

The traveller expressed his thanks, but declined the proffered civility.

"Why where, in the devil's name, did you come from?" said Noseworthy, "that you scorn a cup of brown ale? Mayhap you have a high stomach, used to the Spanish or the Gascoyne vintage, or to a matter of some flimsy drink of claret, that is as light and as poor as a Frenchman's purse? Yet, after all," continued Noseworthy, as he eyed sharply the young man, "you look more like one of Father Peter's penitents, who has drunk cold water so long, and kissed the rod so often, that his bones and his flesh seem parting company. From what part of the world, pray, may you be, young gentleman, if 'tis no offence to ask a civil question?"

"From the Continent," said the traveller.

"The Continent," cried Noseworthy; "'tis a wide word, and takes in latitude. But by what cognomen may the geographers term that particular part, an it like you to speak it, which has sent forth your honourable self, young sir?"

“ The Low Countries,” was the answer.

“ Low enough they have been to you, as I take it,” said Noseworthy. “ You have served then, may be ?”

The traveller answered, “ he was indeed from the wars.”

“ From the wars !” exclaimed the hostess, raising her head as she spoke, whilst engaged in toasting the bread to form the posset of ale for her new guest : “ from the wars, say you ? Then I will warrant you have heard of a kinsman of mine who followed there, after having first served Admiral Drake, one Master John Fitz. My kinsman’s name was Andrew Morton. He was a wild young fellow, so I fear no good is come of him. You have heard tell, I dare say, of John Fitz’s death too ?”

“ I have indeed,” replied the traveller with a sigh.

“ And you knew him, mayhap ?” said the hostess. “ And where were you on the day that men say he was killed ?”

“ In the same action,” answered the traveller.

“ And you were not killed, then, yourself ?” said the hostess. “ Well, now, only to see how strange things do fall out—here dies a young gentleman, the only son of his father, who has

a world of wealth, and his sondies; whilst a poor man, who can scarce keep body and soul together, comes home to tell the tale alive, as well as if nothing had happened."

"Nay, surely not so, good woman," said the Jew, "for it seems this youth hath encountered hardships and toils, and may be many hard blows for little profit. And where, young man," continued Levi, "where may you have tarried since that day of blood?"

"In a prison," said the traveller, "from which I am but lately freed. But the evening wears away, and I must think of journeying on."

"You go, may be, to seek your friends," said Levi; "and if you do, I will warrant you welcome, for you look like a gentle youth, and such a one as a father, or a kinsman, would gladly see restored to his bosom. You will be as welcome as was Isaac to Abraham, when at Jehovah Jirah he was restored to his father's knees."

"Aye," said the hostess, "fathers have great trouble for their absent and dead sons. Now poor old Sir Hugh, I hear, is breaking his heart by inches for the loss of his only son; and I am sorry for it, for every body says he is a kindly hearted old gentleman."

“ He sorrows for the boy,” said Levi, “ even as Jacob sorrowed for Joseph when they brought him his coat of many colours dyed in blood. War is as fell a beast as the wildest that roams through the desert ; it is fierce as the young lion seeking his food. War spares neither the son of the noble knight nor the offspring of the poorest hind.”

“ Why now,” said the hostess, “ that’s just what I used to say to Andrew Morton, when he would go in the wars against the Spaniards. Says I, war is like a glutton, that never has enough to fill his self, though his belly be stuffed with dead men. Aye, my kinsman Andrew was always, from a boy, as wild as a Dartmoor colt, and could never be kept to his labour. So, you see, he went out one day to see the fine shew, when Sir Francis Drake brought the water he had made come over hill, rock, and dale, all the way from Dartmoor to Plymouth. It was a fine sight to be sure, there to see the Mayor and all the Aldermen, all in their red gowns, go out to meet the water, and bid it welcome to their town ; and then they all returned with Sir Francis Drake, at the head of them, and the stream followed after them into the streets. And then the drums beat, and the

flags were flying, and the guns went off, and nothing was talked of but Sir Francis and his exploits, and so my kinsman must needs go after him to the seas, and he left father and mother, and home, and went on board the ship that lay off Plymouth to go the Lord knows where, instead of staying in Devonshire to plough the land."

"To plough the ocean, to be sure," said Noseworthy, "and turn up a furrow round about the globe, as I and Drake have done before him; to see how the sun looks where he never goes to bed, and what sort of candles light the Poles, where night is perpetual."

"La!" said the hostess, staring with wonder, "and what may they be like, if a body may make so free as to ask your worship?"

"Like a woman's love, dame," replied Noseworthy, "that will burn out, though it promises to last for ever."

"It is even but too true a figure," said the Jew, "for I have heard of one woman's love which, I think, is all as waning; very whimsical at least, that will not to-day, and yet will to-morrow."

"I'll wager you a silver tester," said the hostess, "that I know who you mean, Master

Levi ; for all the country rings with it. Mistress Margaret Champernoun, who would none of Sir Nicholas Slanning, as people say, is now going to wed him, though Master John Fitz's ghost has let her have no peace since the match was concluded."

The traveller raised his head, and was about to speak, when Noseworthy exclaimed, "'Tis all a lie, I tell you ; country gossip—nothing but a cursed lie, that the old cronies tell over a mess of warm pottage. Slanning is bent on the New World, and sails with Halkit in his next voyage."

The traveller arose. "Is your honour going?" said the hostess.

"Yes, instantly," replied the traveller ; "let me have my horse—my journey may no longer be delayed."

"Young gentleman," said Noseworthy, "may I ask without offence, for I mean none, which way you are bound, and to what point you steer?"

"Over Roborough Down," was the answer. "Have you ordered my horse to be saddled, good hostess?"

"Yes, truly have I," replied Grace Morton. "I stepped out of the kitchen to do it ;

but Jaek Ostler says tis a sorry beast, and so jaded that he will scarce carry you a mile without coming down; and I am sorry it is so, for these parts be sadly *infected* with evil rovers, and nobody, people say, can cross the Down after sunset, without danger of being stopped by the band of outlaws."

"The band of outlaws!" said the traveller, "that is a new thing, indeed, in these parts."

"New or old," cried the hostess, "it is but too true. There's not a worse set of thieves in all England than this gang. I can't keep a hen or a chicken for them; and 'tis well, maybe, that I am so poor, or I might have my throat cut, or my head gone, every time I go to-bed, before I get up again in the morning."

"Once is quite enough for such an accident, good woman," said Noseworthy, "unless, like Saint Denis, you could rise up and clap it on again. But tush—scare babes with the cry of the wolf, your mastiff never fears him. I care not for all the outlaws that breathe, were they as bold as those of Sherwood, and had a Robin Hood to lead them on."

"I don't say you do, worshipful sir," said the hostess; "but this young man is quite another kind of a body, and looks no more fit to

contend with a cut-purse, than I am to contend with the pope."

"And who are these outlaws with which you threaten me?" inquired the traveller.

"A desperate crew," said the woman; "they were once miners, but now God knows what they are, or where they haunt, for no justice's warrant can find them, though the magistrates and the portreeve, and the two town constables, have been at a world of trouble to *comprehend* them; and as your honour's horse is such a poor beast, and you seem yourself not in much better condition, if you should happen to come to harm, I should not like it to be said that I turned out a poor traveller to be stopped and murdered on the Down; so if you will but tarry all night, you shall have half of Jack's bed, and it shan't cost you a groat more when you go away."

"I thank you much, my good hostess," replied the traveller; "but I cannot stay; my journey demands such speed as I may make, thus ill-prepared for it."

"Better tarry, good youth," said the Jew, "for you are but in a poor plight to meet an enemy; and even were you better off in horse and limb, remember what says Holy Writ—the

race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Listen to age ; my grey hairs may claim the freedom to counsel as an elder. Be advised by me, for to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams."

"Fat of a farthing candle," said Noseworthy ; "why, what a chicken-hearted fellow you would make my young man of the wars here. But hark ye, Sir traveller, we all know that there are blanks as well as prizes to be got by service. Foul gales as well as fair winds, make up the life of a soldier as well as of a seaman ; and you have had storms enough, it seems. You are but just escaped from shipwreck, as I may say, and have not yet put into harbour to new rig and new bottom your vessel, and are therefore somewhat ill-prepared for action. Now I, on the contrary, am under full sail, and offer you an armed convoy ; for, look you here," he continued, pointing to a pair of pistols stuck in his girdle, "do you see these barkers ? and here's a bit of cold iron, as good a dirk as ever hung on a man's thigh. I'll join you, for I am going the same road, and we'll face the devil if he lets us, either in the shape of man or beast."

The traveller paused a moment before he replied. He seemed reluctant to accept the

proffered convoy of Captain Noseworthy, but some thought, perhaps as to his own feeble and helpless condition, and not well knowing how to decline an offer which, however roughly it might be given, appeared kindly intended, determined him, and he accepted the seaman for his companion over Roborough Down.

The horses were ordered, whilst the valiant captain in some haste finished another tankard of ale, and drinking a pleasant voyage to himself and his companion, he threw down his reckoning, bade a good evening to Levi and the hostess, and bidding the traveller follow as fast as he could, went to hasten the boy in bringing the horses from the stables.

The Jew watched him out with the eye of a hawk, and as soon as he saw him, from the window, engaged in talking to Jack Ostler, and clapping his horse upon the neck, he came close up to the traveller, who was about paying the widow for his fare, and said softly, "You are young, and my bosom yearns to you in pity. I know not wherefore it is so, do not ask me, but something tells me, good youth, that evil will betide you if you go forth with yonder cutting swaggerer this night. Tarry where you are; accept the pallet the good widow offers

you, and to-morrow the light of the sun may be to you as a light of safety. Go not, for your life, with yonder son of Belial, for, like Saul, he hath an evil spirit, which thou hast no means to lull asleep."

"I thank you, but I cannot tarry, old man," said the traveller. "I cannot abide here another hour; my mind is ill at ease—you know not by what fiend I am urged on."

"But I know with what fiend you go forth," replied Levi. "Falsehood, braggery, a bold hand and a cruel heart, are fiends that walk in flesh and bones."

"Here is a trifle in payment of the fare I have tasted in your house, good hostess," said the traveller; "I am sorry it is not more, but I am poor, and though I cannot accept your kindness, I will always remember it gratefully."

"You go then?" said the Jew. "May the God of Abraham be your shield, for my weak aid is vain. Yet stay, but a moment stay. He is poor, he may need that coin; give it him back, woman, I am sure it is his last mite. I will pay his charges. God knows for what purpose he may need even that trifle."

The traveller looked astonished at the vehemence of the Jew. "It is indeed," said he,

“ the last coin I have about me, and for this act of service I will be beholden to you. I will find the means hereafter to requite you—that is, if I live. Farewell, my companion calls on me to hasten. I have no fears. Adieu.”

The Jew shook his head mournfully, and followed the stranger with his eyes till he was fairly out of sight.

CHAPTER XII.

A thousand more mischances than this one,
Have learned me how to brook this patiently.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE younger traveller mounted his horse with an air of doubt and uneasiness imprinted in strong characters upon every line of his countenance. Whatever might be his own motives for pressing on his journey, the warning words of the Jew had made some impression on his mind ; nor could it be supposed that either the conversation or the manners of his companion were at all likely to remove the prejudices excited against him. Still there was no help for it, for though the traveller was a young man by no means deficient in spirit, he was too sensible of his own weakness, reduced as he had lately been by a wasting fever and long confinement, to place any reliance on his own strength and power of resistance.

All things then considered, it appeared to him the safest, and the wisest plan, to admit the amicable terms held out by the talkative cap-

tain, who appeared to be perfectly well acquainted with both the honest hostess and the Jew. It was true, Levi had spoken of him in harsh terms, and had thrown out dangerous insinuations; yet they were but insinuations, unsupported by any ostensible charge. They might arise from prejudice, or malice; to such he would not listen. The vice of suspicion is seldom the vice of youth, and it was not that of our invalid traveller, who, resolving to cast aside all fear for himself, gave up his mind to other thoughts, of a nature too anxious to be easily dismissed.

In this frame of mind he rode forward at an easy pace, for his horse was not in a condition to admit of fast riding, and the shipman, who was a true sailor in respect to horsemanship, ambled by his side, now pulling his rein awry, then suddenly twitching it, and anon drawing up and letting loose again his hold, so that the horse, unused to such government, and thinking his rider knew not what he was about, seemed once or twice much disposed to take the business of the journey into his own direction, and to set off as hard as he could gallop. Here the traveller interfered, and recommending a freer use of the curb rein, the irritated animal, that

had some mettle in him, was at length brought into submission.

“For my part,” said Captain Noseworthy, “I would rather steer a ship in the Bristol Channel in a dark night, when the wind is blowing up a hurricane in my teeth, than trust my neck on the back of one of these cursed rickety jades that won’t obey the helm, nor stop when a man has a mind to cast anchor. A seaman on the back of a horse is as much out of place as a fish on dry land. It will be long ere I put my bones in jeopardy again, when I once more shoot into harbour. But did you ever hear such a tale of hobgoblin as the old woman and the Jew told us just now, about outlaws, and the devil knows what?”

“That their accounts were exaggerated I can well believe,” said the traveller, “for there is no glass that magnifies like fear; yet I conclude they were not wholly unfounded.”

“For the matter of that, why no, worshipful sir,” replied the captain; “there are, I believe, in these parts, some stout fellows, who deal with the world after the order of nature; and finding its laws hostile to them, they are somewhat hostile to its laws: so that when a point of opinion lies between justice and their own wants,

they generally settle the matter in the readiest way, and carve for themselves as necessity may require—self-preservation being the first law of nature.”

“ In short, they are outlaws and thieves to boot,” said the traveller. “ I wonder our government does not interfere to rid the country of such a nest of rogues, if the magistracy of the county is too weak to deal with them.”

“ Why the government,” said Noseworthy, “ all things considered, have their hands pretty full of work at present ; for what with Spaniards abroad, and sending out Drake on the high seas to look after them, and these discontents at home, and the Irish kernes, and the faction about the Scotch queen ; the sweet countenance of our gracious sovereign may be made to look devilish sour, if any of these parties should chance to give her a seat a little lower than that of the throne.”

“ They will not, they cannot do it,” exclaimed the traveller with warmth ; “ there is not a true heart, there is not an arm in all England, but will rise to protect her. Her enemies say much of her weaknesses, and her friends speak only of her virtues ; but she is a mortal woman, and therefore some shades of frailty may sully the

lustre of her mind ; but take her as she is, faults and virtues together, and where would England find such another queen ? who is at once a lioness in terror to her enemies, but the friend, the mother of her people."

"Why well said, my lad of battles," cried Noseworthy ; "I find thy tongue can run fast enough when it likes thee. 'Tis a pity, though, that her majesty, who they say is never indifferent to the young and brave, so long as they be bachelors, should let such a gallant cavalier as thyself thus fall into neglect in her service. Surely thy old doublet and tale of the wars, would gain for thee the pitying smile of majesty, did it come within ken of the court."

"Nay, now you jest with me," said the young man ; "it is not for such as I appear to be to approach near the court ; and, sooth to say, I have other thoughts in my head. I think you named but now that you had been much abroad, and that—"

"I have dropt anchor," said Noseworthy, interrupting him, "in all the wide seas of the globe, in faith I have. Why, man, I sailed in Drake's ship the *Dreadnought*, till I became afterwards a trader in the merchant service on my own bottom. I was with the noble-hearted

fellow when he met with that mischance near the Antartic poles, when Drake rapped twice, and loudly too, on the very gates of death, by banging his vessel on a shoal as foul as hell's bottom. Had we knocked the third time, we had surely been answered by the king of hour-glasses and cross-bones in his own person ; for, says Drake to me, ‘ if God, who holds the wind in his fist, should but open his little finger to let out the smallest blast, we are all lost ;’ and so I helped him to form the raft on which we floated, bobbing up and down like corks in a bucket for six hours, till we were picked up, after this shipwreck, off *Nombre de Dios*. I have since served enough for ten men in my time—have been where the mountains are all ice, and the sea looks like the tub of a laundress, nothing but snow, froth and foam ; where, if a man speaks, his words are frozen up till the next general thaw. I have seen the land that the blackamoor talks about in the play at the Globe, the land of the ‘ *Anthropophagi*, whose heads do grow below their shoulders.’ Strange sights indeed have I seen in my travels—ice and sun, cold and heat, north and south, east and west, have all had their turns with me. There are, I

believe, few travellers, on land or sea, who have seen half so much as I have done."

"I nothing doubt it," said the young man, "and that you have seen more than many others, of wits less observing, could possibly find out. I think you named just now a—a Sir Nicholas Slanning, and said that he was going abroad, or something to that effect?"

"I did; what of him?" replied Noseworthy.

"Oh, nothing," said the traveller, "only that I would be glad to learn any news of a gallant gentleman of whose family I know something."

"Why, yes," answered Noseworthy, "I believe I did say he was like the rest of them, agog to pick up some of those treasures which may be had for the gathering in the New World."

"And the report of his marriage, then," said the traveller, after a short pause, "is, you think, unfounded?"

"Country gossip, as I said before," replied the Captain. "Why don't you know that the talk of weddings, and all other of the devil's contracts, makes up the occupation of every woman, old or young, where there are houses enough standing together to be called a town,

with the church in the midst of them? If a man but looks on a maid, forsooth he is ready to sign and seal for her; but if he walks or talks with her, you may call the ringers, for the thing is settled, and he is ready to take her to the church. No, no: Sir Nicholas Slanning, take my word for it, is free, and worth fifty married men yet."

The traveller dropt the conversation, and fell into a train of thought, which for some time Noseworthy, who amused himself with whistling as he jogged on, did not interrupt. They now were gradually ascending the high lands of Roborough Down. The surrounding scene commanded by this eminence was of the most striking character. To the west, where the view was bounded by the Cornish hills, appeared, far distant in the intervening space, meadows, vallies, and gentle slopes clothed with wood. The Tamar, whose waters now shone like silver, from the light reflected by a mass of white clouds, resembling in their forms mountains covered with snow, wound in a serpentine course, at a distance through the valley. To the east arose, above every surrounding height, the bold and table summit of Sheep's Tor, that now looked white as marble against the

deep ultramarine blue of the sky; an effect produced by the glitter of the setting sun which streamed upon it. The vale of Meavy (whose ancient church, and venerable oak, of gigantic circumference, are to this day objects of peculiar interest) opened on the view in all its beauty; whilst its little streamlet, so diminished as to appear like a line of light, strayed, as it were, amidst a fairy world of enchantment.

Looking towards the north, an expansive, but elevated plain, beyond Tavistock, was seen to bound the view, with the conical eminence of Brent Tor, and its "cloud-capt tower," perched on the very summit of the eminence, as if to serve the purpose of a beacon both to sea and land.

They at length came in sight of a rock that stood insulated in the midst of this extensive down. The obscurity of twilight, now fast gathering round, and quickly changing the colour of every object to that of universal gloom, prevented the hollows and fissures of the rock from being seen; and it looked against the sky, which still retained some faint traces of light, a tall and bulky mass, that seemed to grow larger as the travellers approached nearer to it.

"There's a rock for you," said Noseworthy.

“ It looks for all the world like the old black hulk of a carrack that lies aground upon her keel. There are strange stories told about that rock ; and if every gossip’s tale were to be credited, these ribs of hard stone may hold a cargo of evil spirits freighted by the devil. They say pixies and mischievous imps, that harm travellers, and lead them into danger, lurk thereabouts.”

“ Idle tales,” replied the young man, “ that may do well enough to amuse clowns and silly women round a Christmas fire but which a man must despise.”

“ But there are some men though, and accounted wise ones too, that don’t despise them,” said Noseworthy. “ Now, for instance, there’s old Sir Hugh Fitz, of Fitz-ford, a most worthy knight of the rosy cross, who came into this world when foolery was the sign of the ascendant in his horoscope ; why he believes in more pixies, imps, and spirits than the devil himself would acknowledge for kindred.”

“ You have a saucy tongue, fellow,” said the traveller, “ to throw these scoffs on the name of an honourable gentleman.”

“ Gramercy !” cried Noseworthy, “ we play Hector to-night, do we ? and flout a friend for

giving his neighbour a just character. Why, man, it touches you, does it—the reputation of the house of Fitz? and the old moon-struck knight must not be named but in sober sadness; though his alchymy, and his puffing, and his melting, and his signs, and his horoscopes, be the theme. For aught I know, you may be as great a fool as he.”

“Keep a civil tongue, insolent varlet,” cried the traveller in wrath, “or I will dash it out of your head for you, weak as you may think me.”

“The devil you will,” replied the captain; “there go two words to that bargain, and the first of them is, if I will let you do it. Men say that old Sir Hugh cast his son’s nativity at his birth; I wonder if the stars ever told him the dead would come to life again on this side Roborough Rock.”

The traveller started, and looked round full in the face of Noseworthy; who now drew his horse nearer to the side of that of his companion, “Sir traveller,” continued the pirate captain, “what will you wager me that I do not raise you a devil, or a host of devils, with as much ease as Sir Hugh could do by his art, out of the hard ribs of yonder granite, with nothing more

than the spell of a boatswain's whistle?" and with these words, ere the stranger could reply, Noseworthy held a small silver pipe to his lips, that hung by a riband round his neck, and whistled with it, as if he had been calling up his boat's crew.

Ere the astonished traveller, who saw he was betrayed, could attempt escape or defence, he was surrounded by several men, all armed, and of the most savage appearance, who rushed forward from behind the rock.—“Villains!” he cried, as one man darted upon him to knock him out of his saddle, whilst another made for his horse's bridle; “villains, murderers, I will sell my life dearly, whatever odds be against me; I will not fall without a blow being struck for my life, for freedom.” He drew his sword as he spoke, and struck at the man who approached him. His arm was instantly arrested by Noseworthy, who came behind him.

“No blows,” said the captain, “no blows, my fine young fellow. We see you are game; but the best cock of the perch can't fight if he is shorne of his spurs—Wrench the sword out of his hand.” The command was instantly obeyed.

“Wretch!” cried the young man, “will you stain your hands with my blood? God will

call you to judgment for this act. You have betrayed me to these men, to murder me."

"No, I have not," said Noseworthy "There's no murder in the case, if you will but be quiet, and hold your tongue—we have too much respect for the ancient gentry of this county, to spill the blood of the son and heir of Sir Hugh Fitz of Fitz-ford. You thought I did not know you, and you wanted to be private, did you? Trust me you shall have privacy to your heart's content; and that no man may intrude upon it, the bowels of the earth will afford you passable security—away with him to the cave."

"What is it you would do with me?" cried the unhappy John Fitz, as they were forcibly binding his arms and hands—"If money be your object, though I have now but one coin about me, yet you know my father's wealth. Give me but liberty, and any sum you name shall be your's—I will swear to it by the most sacred of oaths. My father would give all he is worth to save me—but now to bind me, now to enslaveme—death were better. Draw thy sword, wretched man. Give me liberty, or give me a grave. I will provoke you to kill me, if you deny me freedom. Wretch, villain, coward, draw thy sword and plunge it into this miserable bosom."

“That’s right,” said Noseworthy, “blow a hurricane if you will. I heed the foul words of a boy no more than I do the howling of a mutineer who is lashed before the mast. But one thing I’ll tell you, for your own sake; if you ever wish to see day’s blessed light again, hold your tongue, or, by God, we will have you down below the hatches of my ship, where you shall see no light but that of a farthing rush the rest of your days—so keep the peace if you are not a fool. Bind his eyes, and carry him off,” continued Noseworthy, “and if he speaks another word, or does but cry out for help, let his jaws be gagged. If he is silent, do him no harm.”

The ruffians, who executed all these commands with as little noise as possible, lost not a moment in binding the eyes of their prisoner; his hands and arms were already secured; and seizing him forcibly between two of them, they passed behind the rock, dragged the unhappy John Fitz with violence across the down, and were soon out of sight. One of the men took the horse that had so lately lost its rider, by the bridle, and, attending Captain Noseworthy, followed after in the same direction.

CHAPTER XIII.



Don John.—"How canst thou cross this marriage?"

Borachio.—"Not honestly; but so covertly that no Dishonesty shall appear in me.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE reader has doubtless seen, with surprise, by what means John Fitz, hitherto supposed dead, suddenly reappeared, and was as suddenly seized by Noseworthy, who acted in concert with the desperate band so often mentioned in our narrative. In order to account for this seizure, as well as certain circumstances connected with it, we must beg to be allowed to retrograde, and begin this chapter with some mention of Standwich, and the outlawed miners with whom he had for a long period been so deeply engaged.

These people, who at the date of our story had rendered themselves fearful in Devon, and whose wild acts gave rise to many tales, the theme of tradition, besides their illicit traffic in working in secret a vein of silver, which by law belonged to the crown, and selling the metal at

a foreign market, often resorted to robbery, and even personal violence to the traveller, as a means of gaining subsistence, when either their being closely watched, or want of opportunity for conveying the metal abroad, interrupted their usual occupation. It may readily be supposed, that persons so dangerous could not long remain in the same haunt without the probability of detection, and of being seized by a superior force under the sanction of justice. To avoid this, the outlaws continually shifted their place of abode. Sometimes they sheltered themselves by living, as we have seen, in the cave of the Virtuous Lady, or in the deep glen of Lidford, where it became difficult, from the precipitous heights by which it was surrounded, the entangled and labyrinth paths, and the thickness of the woods, to come upon them unawares, so as to secure them.

Dartmoor also, which, as we before stated, at this time had no regular roads, afforded an admirable retreat for the perpetrators of villainy. Wistman's Wood, its massive rocks, its steep ascent, and its sheltering, though dwarf oaks, set any attempt at attack in such a spot at defiance. The vast tors, the caves, and numerous hollows, afforded what might be termed prisons

of security to whosoever chose to take advantage of them. No wonder, therefore, that a half savage and outlawed people, whose sagacity, in finding means of self-preservation, was sharpened by continual necessity, should thus easily evade all detection, and indeed, set at defiance the many plans that had been attempted to subdue them.

Those plans had so repeatedly failed, that they were seemingly abandoned, and the gentry, when they wished to make a journey over the moor, or in any solitary district, were content to travel in company, or with a body of well-armed followers, as their best mode of security from personal attack. Notwithstanding this, many frightful depredations were from time to time effected. Now and then, though not often, a person was found murdered, probably from having used resistance; and one or two were *missing*, of whose fate no trace was to be found.

Desperate as these men had become, they were tired of their own condition, with all its attendant hardships, risks, and privations; and would have been glad, by way of trying to better themselves, could they have returned once more to civil life; but there was no hope of pardon, after such accumulated offences. The only chance left, at least they were made to

think so, rested on a total change in the government; which, could they assist in effecting, though such assistance should be but as a drop of water in the ocean, the successful adherents of rebellion might hope to find pardon, and a restoration to their civil rights, from the new powers they had helped to raise. It was from this motive they had first listened to Standwich, who knew well, that in all rebellions, no body of people could act with greater determination than such as are collected from men already desperate in their fortunes, who can lose nothing, but may gain every thing by the hazard.

Standwich, one of the most active agents of Rome and Spain during the reign of Elizabeth, had long been the medium through which a traitorous intercourse had been held with many of the disaffected in the West. He it was who, whilst he sheltered himself from pursuit and death by living with the outlawed people, had won them over to be ripe to join the standard of rebellion, so soon as it could be raised in this part of the country with any probability of success. We shall not here enter upon the subject of the numerous attempts of this nature that were made, overthrown, and again attempted in England, during the reign of the

maiden Queen, till the death of Mary Queen of Scots, and the defeat of the Spanish Armada, crushed them all by rendering them hopeless. At the period of our narrative Mary was alive, though a prisoner; and in every part of the country there lurked some secret emissaries, who asserted her pretensions to the crown, and stirred up her partisans, by representing to them, that to set her upon the throne, and bring in the old religion, would be a most acceptable service to God and man. The vigour of Elizabeth's ministers, and her own firmness and sagacity, continually defeated these plans; and though Standwich had hitherto done little more than intrigue and traffic for Rome, he still persevered—still hoped, and was again, after a considerable absence abroad, once more busied in England, and living in his old haunts.

It was after this return that he held, as we have lately seen, that decisive interview with Margaret, who, though she knew that his life was in danger as a popish recusant, and believed him to be a zealous member of the Romish Church, as little suspected his acting the part of treachery and rebellion, as she did that he was her own father: both were things of which she was entirely ignorant.

Having said thus much of Standwich, as a necessary preface to the future events of our narrative, we must now draw the attention of the reader to certain circumstances that occurred but the *very night before* John Fitz was purposely waylaid, and made a prisoner, on his return from abroad; as they will at once explain whatever may appear extraordinary or mysterious in that affair. Our scene refers to Kilworthy, where Lady Howard was on *that* evening, according to her frequent custom, both a guest and an inmate with the family.

Lady Howard sat in mute expectation within the chamber appropriated to her use. She had retired thither at the hour of rest. Her countenance was anxious, and she seemed to look upon a lamp, that stood burning upon the table, with considerable attention, although there was a vacancy in her gaze which shewed it was no outward object, but rather her own thoughts, that engrossed her attention. As the bell in the old clock-house struck successively till the hour was complete; she counted every stroke with the utmost exactness; and as she concluded the last, she pronounced the word *ten* aloud, in a firm voice, and instantly started from her seat.

“ Ten !” repeated Lady Howard; “ the hour

is come, then, and this night shall decide it—all the family are at rest—now for the door.” So saying, she took up a small key, trimmed her lamp carefully, and gently opening a door behind the arras, prepared to descend a little staircase, which led from the chamber to a sort of postern-gate that opened near the foot of the terrace leading to the gardens. She carefully shaded the lamp, lest it should be extinguished by a sudden rush of air when the door opened, descended step after step with as light a foot as that of a fairy, and with a firm hand applied the key to the door. It opened, and she looked out. She paused a moment, placed the lamp on the last stair, and stepping forth, ventured once or twice to clap her hands, yet not so loud as to make much noise.

The signal was instantly heard ; and a figure, which at this hour of the night could alone be distinguished as something dark moving forward, sallied from beneath a kind of out-house that stood near, advanced directly towards the door, and entered. Not a word passed. Lady Howard took up the lamp, secured the portal, and motioned to the figure to follow her. When she had led the way into her chamber, she made fast the door, and dropping the arras before it,

said, "Now we are secure; speak freely, you have nothing to fear."

"What should I fear?" replied the person addressed; "if aught visits us here, you will have most cause to tremble; and if I meet interruption from without, I carry that with me shall silence it. My watch-dogs have fangs to tear, as well as mouths to bark;" and dropping from her shoulders the cloak in which she was muffled, the short sturdy figure of Betsy Grimal might be seen, armed, as usual, like a man, with pistols at her girdle. Her figure was, altogether, sufficiently formidable to have shaken the nerves of most young ladies; but not carrying enough of terror with it to create the least emotion in those of the stout-hearted Lady Howard.

"Sit down, woman," she said to Betsy Grimal; "you have tarried long in the cold. I have secured for you that which shall warm you;" and stepping aside to a little closet, she produced a small silver cup, that gave a spicy smell to all the apartment, and placed it on a table before Betsy.

"I have waited for you in agony," continued Lady Howard; "have you gained any certain intelligence of what you told me?"

“ I have,” replied Betsy ; “ and this night something must be determined.”

“ But surely you are in error ?” said Lady Howard. “ Perhaps all may be over in time—one day more, and we are safe. The day after the morrow, you know, is fixed for the nuptials of Sir Nicholas Slanning and Margaret Champernoun.”

“ And as there is light in heaven,” replied Betsy, “ ere that day comes, John Fitz will have returned to claim his bride—to-morrow he sets foot on this ground.”

“ Good God !” exclaimed Lady Howard ; “ then all my hopes are lost ! Delay his coming, if but for a day ; do that, and all I have shall be yours. What angel, or what devil, could thus rise up to thwart our plans ? Can you think of nothing ? Are you sure John Fitz is free ? Has he given intelligence of his being alive, of his escape from prison, of his passage ? How comes he ? By what means ?

“ Will you hear me tell a plain tale ?” said Betsy Grimbal, “ or am I to listen to these questions, and lose the time in words which should be given to deeds ? Will you hear me ?”

“ Speak ! speak !” cried Lady Howard, “ I conjure you tell me all. My mind has been in

fearful agitation, ever since you conveyed to me the intelligence of his being on ship-board at such a moment as this. You did tell me that your tidings came from a sure quarter; let me hear all then, and I will try to listen with composure."

"You know well the name of George Standwich?" said Betsy.

"I do," replied the lady. "What of him? He it is who is believed to be the leader of these outlaws that infest the neighbourhood. A price is set upon his head!"

"It is," said Betsy. "But you owe him much for the good service that by *his* means I can now do for you; though I grant that he thinks not how far he serves another in working out his own will. He knows nothing of my services to you."

"And shall not," said Lady Howard, haughtily. "I have wealth—I am free and independent. Serve me, as you have promised, by any means; and I have enough to spare to make the fortunes of twenty such as you are. Will you have more gold now?"

"Not till I have won it by fair service," replied Betsy; "and then I will claim *your* promise when *all* is done."

I do remember it; I will keep it, as there

is a God above us," said Lady Howard. "I have promised to furnish you with the means and the opportunity to quit this country for ever—to go where you will be in safety, and end your days as you list. It shall be done. Go on—for the hours wear away. You spoke of George Standwich."

"I did," replied Betsy Grimbald. "It was by his means that I learnt the truth. Standwich was with the Duke of Alva, that fearful foe to heretics, when John Fitz was brought in before the Duke, a bleeding, wounded prisoner. Standwich saw him fast locked in fetters of iron in the cell of a strong castle."

"Cruel man!" said Lady Howard; "could he see a youth so noble, so brave, thus fearfully handled! and that too by his worst enemies?"

"What!" exclaimed Betsy, "do you lament that he was not freed to wed yonder Margaret? The report of his death," she continued, "soon found its way to England; for he was seen to fall where hundreds were mowed down before the forces of the Duke of Alva. Now it so happened that John Fitz was not a solitary captive; for a servant of his, one Andrew Morton, who became a prisoner in a very different way from his master, for he was taken whilst flying from the field of action, was also confined near

him. Standwich knew this man, and that he could easily be wrought upon ; gained him over to his purpose, and on condition that he should serve Standwich, in whatever way might be pointed out to him, procured this fellow his liberty. Fair promises, and fairer rewards, were next given to him, so that whilst Morton was to pretend that he remained in the town merely to serve his old master who was in prison, he was in fact a spy upon his actions, under the control of Standwich."

"What actions could a prisoner do that needed the observation of a spy?" said Lady Howard.

"You shall hear," continued Betsy. "Whilst in prison, John Fitz wrote continually to England, urging his friends to use their interest to get him exchanged for some other prisoner of rank. These letters Andrew Morton promised to find the means of forwarding. He did so, by betraying them into the hands of Standwich. At length the governor where John Fitz was held captive became less strict in his duty (for the young man had fallen into a fever that nearly deprived him of life), and taking advantage of this, Fitz contrived his own escape, and, weak as he was, succeeded in it."

“He had at all times a noble spirit, that defied danger,” said Lady Howard.

“Andrew Morton,” continued Betsy Grimal, “traced his steps, and once more joined his master. He found him still weak in body, and in the same distressed condition in which he had quitted his captivity; but so great was his impatience to reach home, that he would not rest a moment to seek relief. He gained the coast, though with much difficulty; when a vessel, friendly to England, brought him once more to these shores. His follower, Andrew, informed Standwich of all these circumstances, and but *this* day sent for him the last letter written by his master; it is addressed to Sir Nicholas Slanning. Standwich was absent at the hour it came to the cave, and I took it from the bearer, who was one of our own men, a fellow long since connected with Morton. Here is the letter, read it, and satisfy yourself.”

Lady Howard’s hand trembled violently as she took the letter thus treacherously betrayed into her power. Some last faint ray of proper feeling gleamed before her view. She paused ere she broke the seal; but another instant presented to her mind the image of Margaret, her envied rival, and it faded like a transient

beam of light that for a moment bursts through the darkness. She hastily tore open the paper, read it, re-read it with deep attention, and dropt her hand upon her knee as she said, "I see not what hopes I have, even should we be able to delay his return to this place. He writes this from Plymouth."

"He does," said Betsy Grimbal. "He is still weak and worn by long confinement in a prison. He has been detained, even since he put his foot on English ground, by some return of sickness.

"He complains too, in this letter," said Lady Howard, "of the extreme unkindness of his father, in having taken no means to attempt his release, or afford him any assistance, though he had written so many letters to inform him of his great distress. This he attributes to his father's fears, lest he should renew his suit to Margaret; and, in consequence of this supposed unkindness, he tells Slanning, in the letter, that he will come to his native town *to-morrow night*, in private. He begs Slanning to meet him by the way, if it is possible, at the little inn near Roborough Down, about sun-set; he will then consult with him what is best to be done before he makes his return known to Sir

Hugh Fitz, and bids his friend assure Margaret of his ever faithful affection, and that he values life but for her sake. He expresses a hope that the sight of his misery may act on his father's heart, to induce him to relent his purpose in that affair on which all his happiness depends; and see, he adds at the conclusion, that in order to be as private as possible in his return, he shall set out to meet Slanning unattended by his servant Andrew. His last line contains a blessing on the name of Margaret."

"Is that all the letter?" said Betsy.

"It is," replied Lady Howard; "I almost despair. Could I have been his deliverer from a prison, I might have hoped something from his gratitude; but now I see I shall gain nothing by delaying his return."

"But I see it and know it too," cried Betsy. "Are you now faint-hearted? do you now draw back? you, who have so long known, and by my means, that he was in captivity. Mark me, lady, and I will show you a way to settle all this matter. In that letter he declares his purpose to be by to-morrow night at Fitzford, and craves Slanning to meet him by the way near Roborough Down. Some one *must* meet him," she added in a significant manner, "but not perhaps the friend he expects to do it."

“ But you will not harm him ?” said Lady Howard, who instantly guessed her meaning. “ If I thought he could but be delayed for a few hours, till Margaret was for ever lost to him—till she was wedded to Slanning—I might consent ; but rather than a hair of his head should be harmed, I would myself give this letter to the old man, who now sits drooping and sorrowing for the loss of his son ; and I would give up my own visionary hopes—for they are but visions—for ever. I would spare the life of John Fitz at any price.”

“ That he might come home to meet such misery as shall make him repent Alva’s vengeance had not completed the work of death,” said Betsy ; “ but that is not my business. I have no wish to delay him, though Standwich would risk a thousand lives, did he but see that letter, to prevent the approach of Fitz ere the marriage should be concluded.”

“ Standwich has not yet seen the letter then ?” said Lady Howard eagerly.

“ No,” replied Betsy ; “ you, lady, broke the seal but now yourself—I wait *your* command to give it him. For rest assured, when once *he* knows its purport, John Fitz, to reach this place

in safety, must first pass over the body of his enemy, as it lies a corpse before him. Margaret once married to Slanning, and Standwich cares not the next hour to what part of the globe John Fitz bends his course; he may traverse every quarter to which the needle points in the card, if he will, and it is all one."

"And what interest can this man, this Standwich," said Lady Howard, "have in Margaret, that it should concern him to whom she is given in marriage?"

"That is his own affair," said Betsy Grimal, "not ours. He was a dear friend to Sir Frederick Champernoun, and they were of one faith, that is something. John Fitz is what Standwich calls a heretic."

"Is such a man as Standwich of any faith?" said Lady Howard; "can he be religious and act such villainy?"

"Aye, marry can he," cried Betsy; "there are those, fair lady, who can wreak their will on men, however wicked it may be, and think they have piety, forsooth, if they give God thanks for it when all is done."

"You know something more of this strange circumstance," said Lady Howard; "I am

sure you do—I will know it before I go forward in this matter.”

“At your own pleasure, lady,” replied Betsy; “but you trap not me to betray my trust—If you *did*, where would be your own warrant? I could as easily betray you to Standwich, as him to you.”

“You would not, you dare not do it,” exclaimed Lady Howard.

“I will not do it,” said Betsy, “and that is enough. You have made it worth my while to be faithful; else, for nothing, I give nothing—my services you have taken at your own price.”

For a moment even Lady Howard looked disconcerted by the bold insolence of the woman she employed; and daring as she was, yet her spirit seemed to shrink before that of the wicked wretch who stood before her; a creature, whom by her own act, she had constituted her accomplice, her confidant, and her guide. After a moment's pause, she said, “I have bought your fidelity, and have bought it largely. I have the means to reward you still farther, if you choose to win them. What is your purpose? What is the aim of all these fearful threats, these forebodings?”

“ I forbode no evils but such as you have taught me to believe would be terrible to you,” replied Betsy. “ If you shudder to think that John Fitz will appear before Margaret is the bride of another, be assured, ere twenty-four hours have past over your head, such will come to pass, unless he *is* prevented, unless he is detained.”

“ If he comes,” said Lady Howard, “ though she stood at the altar’s foot, so well do I know her inmost soul towards him, she will renounce Slanning in the face of all the world—then my hopes die before me.”

“ We must act, at least I must act, to-night,” cried Betsy : “ wherefore hesitate ? there is no time to be lost. When the hounds are close behind, does the hunted hart pause to leap the barrier that lies between her and the yelling dogs ? or does she lie down, and think but on flight when the woodman’s blade is laid upon her sobbing throat ? I must instantly seek Standwich.”

“ For what purpose ?” enquired Lady Howard.

“ To give him that letter,” said Betsy. “ He will find a way, I will be his warrant, to

throw some lett in the path of John Fitz, that he shall not trouble these bridal honours with his claim upon the bride."

"But who will be warrant that Standwich does no personal injury to the unhappy youth?" said Lady Howard. "Though cold to me, he is, and ever must be, dearly beloved by me. He never cast a thought on me," she continued, in a voice that betrayed the greatest anxiety, "never since he knew Margaret; but I have loved him with unceasing tenderness. I prize wealth, beauty, rank, but as they might render me worthy of him—and yet he is cold to me."

"Let him wed Margaret, then," said Betsy, "and all is ended between you."

"No, never, never!" exclaimed Lady Howard. "But for Margaret, I might have won his love. Our families desired the union, and he seemed not averse to the thoughts of it. He was kind, courteous, attentive to me—all was in a right train; and she came, came to seduce his affections, and to tear him from my hopes—No, he shall never wed her—I may lose him, my plan to rekindle the faint spark of his regard to me may fail; but a rival, the rival who stole him from me, shall never triumph in my

misery. If I am unhappy, other hearts shall ache as well as mine."

"I go," said Betsy Grimbal, "I go to seek Standwich."

"First give me, woman, the solemn assurance that no harm shall befall Fitz in what is done. Should but a hair of his head be injured by thy means, I will give thee up to justice, though my own shame and ruin follow such a step. I will have assurance of his safety."

What harm should befall him?" said Betsy. "Think you Standwich would needlessly embroil his hands in the blood of a silly boy? and by so doing draw down, perhaps, upon his own head more vengeance, greater danger? Believe me he has enough to combat already—No, I will be his warrant that John Fitz is safe in life and limb; he will but be a prisoner for a few hours, if the worst comes of it. When the marriage is past, he shall be set free. I promise that, and on that let your future reward to me depend."

"Let it be so," said Lady Howard; "I am satisfied. I will no longer oppose your purpose. When Margaret is wedded, and Fitz once more at liberty, this purse, it contains one hundred marks in gold, shall be yours, and not till then

—now farewell, the night wanes apace, it is time to depart.”

“ It is,” said Betsy. “ But the air is cold and piercing, and I have some distance to walk to do my errand to Standwich. This draught will keep my blood warm to help my purpose. Lady, I quaff this to our success,” and so saying she took up the silver goblet, held it a moment in her hand, and looking, with an eye of satisfaction on the sparkling brim, smiled, and then tossed off the contents at one draught, as if it had been a cup of water. Lady Howard now pressed her departure.

“ I go,” said Betsy, and she added in her deep and harsh voice, “ I go to do that which, I will warrant me, shall one day make this country, far and near, ring with the impotent anger of ten thousand railing tongues. But *you* will be satisfied; for there is that in your dark eye, Lady Howard, which kindles at a bold deed. I know not how it is, yet there is a pleasure, your puritan would call it a pleasure such as the damned feel, in seeing the misery that we ourselves *have* the power to work. That is *my* share in this business, together with those bright pieces that are my promised guerdon. And though I have not found it written in my

horoscope, yet will I prophesy, that long after this body shall be nothing, or as nothing, a heap of dust, the very name of Betsy Grimbald shall scare the clown if he lingers on his way after night-fall. Fame is dear to all, and mine shall become the common wonder."

Whilst Betsy, thus in the very pride of her iniquity, pronounced an eulogium on her own powers and deserts, she wrapped her cloak close about her, and following Lady Howard down the little winding stairs, departed with all speed to put in practice her wicked plan for the detention of John Fitz. It is needless to say how readily Standwich agreed to it, or by what means he executed it with the assistance of Captain Noseworthy, since it is already known to the reader.

END OF VOL. II.

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